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OF MY FATHER
DEVINARAYAN CHATTERJEE

PREFACE

In the following pages an attempt has been made, for the first time, to trace the history of the worship of the War-god in ancient India. The first chapter deals with the Kārttikeya-worship as revealed in the later Vedic literature. The god was not known to the Ṛgvedic hymnists, there being no reference either to him or to his worship in the *Ṛgveda*. He is mentioned several times in the Upaniṣads and the Sūtras. It has been shown that, by the end of the period of the Sūtra literature, Skanda-Kārttikeya became a prominent member of the Brahmanical pantheon.

Worship of Skanda-Kārttikeya as known to the epic and Puranic poets is the subject of the second chapter. The present author has had to ransack almost all the printed Purāṇas (including the Upa-Purāṇas) and also the two epics. By the time of the composition of these works the god became a favourite deity and accounted for a good number of verses of almost all these works.

The third chapter shows the development of the Kārttikeya cult in the historical period in Northern India. Non-Brahmanical literature as well as the works of non-religious character have been consulted ; the present writer has also spared no pains to go through the published inscriptions. The fourth chapter tells the story of the development of Skanda-worship in South India. Ancient Tamil works as available in English translations have been studied in this connection. Available South Indian inscriptions have also been duly consulted and every effort has been made to make the account as much authentic as possible.

The fifth chapter gives an exhaustive account of the different places which were sacred to Kārttikeya in ancient India. The writer is indebted to none but the original sources, so far as this chapter is concerned. Some of the

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places, mentioned here, have not been referred to by any previous writer.

Different names of the War-god have been discussed in the sixth chapter. The fact that the god had so many names indirectly testifies to his extensive and solid popularity with the ancient Indians. 'Aspects of Kārttikeya's character' is the subject of study in the seventh chapter; that he was a vastly complex deity will be evident from this section. Skanda was not only regarded as a god of war, but was also looked upon as a god of learning and wisdom; the same god was also the patron-deity of thieves and burglars and his amorous nature too, has been alluded to.

The last chapter deals with the iconography of Kārttikeya ; in this connection the iconographic descriptions of this god as found in the early literature, have been thoroughly discussed. A large number of Kārttikeya images of both North and South India have been described in this chapter. The writer's indebtedness to the previous scholars has been indicated in the Foot-notes.

Both the Venkaṭeśvara and Vaṅgavāsī editions of the Purāṇas have been consulted. References are mostly from the more well-known Venkaṭeśvara edition ; quotations, etc., from the Great Epic have been generally taken from the Gītā Press edition of that work published from Gorakhpur ; nothing, however, has been referred to, which does not find a place in the Critical edition published by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.

The topic of the present thesis was suggested to the author by D. C. Sircar, Carmichael Professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture, Calcutta University in 1962. Since then, he has remained a perennial source of inspiration of this author. The writer is also deeply indebted to Sri D. Mukherjee. Reader in Ancient Indian History and Culture, Calcutta University, his Supervisor, who has been his unfailing guide throughout.

The volume, now published, was submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Calcutta University, in January, 1967. The author is perfectly and painfully aware of the various shortcomings of his work. There are also a few misprints for which he can only crave the indulgence of his readers.

Lastly, the author desires to thank Sri A. C. Ghosh, the Director-in-charge of the Ghosh Printing House Private Limited, for his help in piloting the book through the press.

Calcutta,
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Asim Kumar Chatterjee

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.B.O.R I.	—	Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.
A.G.I.	—	Ancient Geography of India.
A.I.H.T.	—	Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, Pargiter.
A.R.A.S.I.	—	Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India.
Arch. Sur. W.I.	—	Archaeological Survey of Western India.
Av.	—	Atharvaveda.
B.G.	—	Bombay Gazetteer.
B.O.R.I.	—	Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.
C.H.I.	—	Cambridge History of India.
C.I.I.	—	Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.
E.I.	—	Epigraphia Indica.
E.R.E.	—	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, edited by Hastings.
G.E.	—	Gupta Era.
H.S.L.	—	History of Sanskrit Literature.
I.A.	—	Indian Antiquary.
I.C.	—	Indian Culture.
I.H.Q.	—	Indian Historical Quarterly.
J.A.	—	Journal Asiatique.
J.A.H.S.	—	Journal of the Andhra Historical Society.
J.A.O.S.	—	Journal of the American Oriental Society.
J.A.S.B.	—	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
J.B.B.R.A.S.	—	Journal of the Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society.
J.D.L.	—	Journal of the Department of Letters, Calcutta University.
J.I.H.	—	Journal of Indian History.
J.I.S.O.A.	—	Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art.
J.N.S.I.	—	Journal of the Numismatic Society of India.

J.R.A.S.	—	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.
J.U.P.H.S.	—	Journal of the Uttar Pradesh Historical Society.
M.A.S.B.	—	Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
M.A.S.I.	—	Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India.
Mbh.	—	Mahābhārata.
M.N.S.I.	—	Memoirs of the Numismatic Society of India.
M.S.	—	Māitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā.
N.I.A.	—	New Indian Antiquary.
P.A.I.O.C.	—	Proceedings of the All-India Oriental Conference.
P.H.A.I.	—	Political History of Ancient India.
Q.J.M.S.	—	Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society.
Rv.	—	Rgveda.
ŚB.	—	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.
S.B.E.	—	Sacred Books of the East.
S.I.I.	—	South Indian Inscriptions.
T.A.	—	Taittirīya Āraṇyaka
Z.D.M.G.	—	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft.

CHAPTER ONE

Skanda-Kārttikeya in the Vedic Literature

The conception of a 'god of war' was common to all the Aryan races. The ancient Greeks had their 'god of war' Ares. The Romans had their Mars. In the earliest Vedic literature Indra and Agni figure largely as the typical leader of the vanguard of the armies. Indra repeatedly receives the epithet *Purandara* (destroyer of the Puras) and his exploits are vividly described in the *Rgveda*[1]. Like Indra Agni, too, appears in the rôle of the general of the gods in the *Rgveda* and the later Vedic literature. In the *Rgveda* Agni's connection with war is mentioned several times.[2] He is invoked in battle in *Rv.* 8. 43. 21 in which he is described as leading the van (8.73.8). We are told that he consumes his worshippers' enemies like dry bushes (4 4.4); he strikes down the malignant as a tree is destroyed by lightning (6.8.5). According to the Ṛgvedic poet, the man whom he protects and inspires in battle, wins abundant food and can never be overcome (1.27.7). In battle he procures space for the gods (1.59.5). He is called *Sahasrajit* (conqueror of thousands) and is also described as a vanquisher of the Dasyus and irreligious Paṇis—both apparently non-Aryan tribes. As is well-known the epithet *Purandara* is generally given to Indra in the Vedic literature; but this epithet as Macdonell observes, is given to the Fire-god more than once, who also receives the attribute 'Vṛtra-slayer'. Macdonell thinks that these warlike qualities of Agni are due to his intimate association with Indra who is the Ṛgvedic god, par excellence, of war; but it should be remembered that the warlike exploits of the Fire-god are not unsuitable to him, specially in the lightning form. In the *Atharvaveda* Agni plays a more important part in battle, sometimes alone, and sometimes in the company of other gods. He is frequently invoked for bestowing success in battles.[3] His connection with war is found in several places of the *Atharvaveda*.[4] He

is pictured as confounding the foes in *Av* (6.67.2). It is, therefore, not surprising that Skanda-Kārttikeya, who is described in the Great Epic and other works as the offspring of this god, should also figure as a god of war. Another trait of Skanda's character viz. his connection with learning and wisdom can be found in the Ṛgvedic character of Agni.[5] The epithets all-knowing (*Viśvavid*), 'possessed of all knowledge' (*Viśvavedas*), 'sage' (*kavi*), possessing intelligence of a sage' (*kavikratu*) are usually reserved for him in that work. Agni also grants offspring like Nejameṣa—a form of Skanda-Kārttikeya mentioned frequently in the Sūtra literature. So we find that some of the characteristics of Skanda-Kārttikeya can be traced in the Vedic conception of Agni, who has a greater right than any other god, to be termed as 'Skanda-progenitor'[6].

With the gradual conquest of Northern India a new god of war, more romantic and comprehensive than either Agni or Indra, made his struggling appearance in the Aryan pantheon. This new god was variously called Kumāra, Skanda and Kārttikeya. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[7] Kumāra is mentioned as the 9th form of Agni or Rudra. Rudra, it should be remembered, in the earliest Vedic literature is often connected with Agni. Here Kumāra appears only as one of the aspects of the Ṛgvedic god of war, Agni. This name is also found in *Rv.* 10.1.35. Here he is mentioned with the chariot of Yama, 'the wheelless chariot' which has one pole but faces in all directions (*acakram ... ... ekeṣaṃ viśvataḥ prāñcam*). Dr. Sukumar Sen[8] suggests that this Kumāra was the prototype of Skanda-Kumāra. The particular *ŚB* passage, referred to above, does not, however, prove that Kumāra was regarded as a god of war at the time of the composition of this monumental Vedic work.

The *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* (2.9.1.11-12) refers to three popular names of the war-god in the form of *Gāyatri mantra*—*tat Kumārāya vidmahe Kārttikeyāya dhīmahi, tannaḥ Skandaḥ pracodayāt*. Although the passage occurs in one of the works of the *Saṃhitā* group, its authenticity is questionable.[9] *Gāyatrī mantras* of the gods and goddesses like Puruṣa-Mahādeva

(Rudra), Girisutā; Karāṭa-Hastimukha (Gaṇeśa), Caturmukha-Padmāsana (Brahmā), Keśava-Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu), Bhāskara-Prabhākara (Sun-god), Somarāja-Mahārāja (Moon-god) and Jvalana-Vaiśvānara (Fire-god) are also included in the particular chapter of the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā*. Gaṇeśa was not only post-Vedic but also a post-epic god, and the occurrence of his name maims the historical value of this portion of that *Saṃhitā*. The 10th *prapāṭhaka* of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* along with the *Gāyatrī mantra* of *Puruṣa-Mahāsena-Saṇmukha* contains the *mantras* of gods like Rudra, Dantī (i. e. Gaṇeśa), Nandi, Garuḍa, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Narasiṃha, Āditya, Durgā and others. In the 16th section of the same *anuvāka* occur the names of all the twelve deities whose *Gāyatrī mantras* have been recited including Ṣaṇmukha (i.e. Kārttikeya)[10]. Skanda is, however, mentioned in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* which in probability is a pre-Buddhist work. Here he is identified with the Vedic sage Sanatkumāra[11]. The *Chāndogya* passage gives no indication that at the time of its composition (*circa* 7th Century B. C.) he was regarded as a war-god. We will later see that in the epic and the Purāṇic literature Skanda is often associated with the sage Sanatkumāra. The *Chāndogya* passage, if it proves anything, shows that at the time of its composition, Skanda was regarded as a separate deity, although not as a god of war.

We will now consider the highly interesting text the *Skanda-yāga* which is included in the *Pariśiṣṭas* of the *Atharvaveda*.[12] The text is also entitled *Dhūrtakalpa* The term *Skandayāga* is descriptive of the text, which contains the ritual of a sacrifice to the god ("the title *Dhūrtakalpa* which means 'Rogue Ordinance' is not so clear. There cannot be any doubt that the term *Dhūrta* has been applied to the god Skanda who is probably represented by an image which is formally brought in at the sacrifice"). The description of Skanda found in the text is almost similar to the epic and Purāṇic accounts of Skanda. Here too, he is associated with the peacock (*yaṃ vahanti mayūrāḥ* 2.3). He is described with bells and banners *ghaṇṭā-patākinī* 2.5).[13] Skanda is surrounded by the company of mothers (*yaśca mātṛgaṇairnityaṃ sadā parivṛte yuvā*). The

god has six mouths and lips and ten eyes, a golden complexion and a brightness filled with that which is light (*Ṣaḍānanoṣṭho daśa locane ca suvarṇa varṇa laghupūrṇabhāṣaḥ*). Śiva, Agni and the Kṛttikās are all described as his parents (5. 1). That the author himself is not sure about Kārttikeya's parentage is proved by the following *śloka* :

"*Āgneyaṃ Kṛttikāputram Aindraṃ kecid adhīyate*
Ke cit Pāśupataṃ Raudraṃ yo 'si' so si namo'stute (6.4)"

"Some read (son) of Agni, some of Kṛttikās (son) of Indra, some (son) of Paśupati, of Rudra, who thou art, art thou, 'reverence' be thee".

It is also interesting to note that Skanda here is definitely identified with Viśākha. Although repeatedly called *Dhūrta* (rogue) he is pictured as a boon-granting, auspicious deity.[14] Goodwin the first editor and translator of the text takes the term *Dhūrta* in the sense of 'Master-thief' and compares him with tha Greek god Hermes. We will later see that in other works also Skanda is connected with thieves.[15]

The date of the composition of this work can never be determined with any degree of certainty ; but it can be reasonably asserted that the date cannot be far removed from the time of the composition of the Sūtra litetature most of which was composed between 600 B. C. and 200 B. C. according to competent authorities. There cannot be any doubt that the poet of this particular text was a great and genuine devotee of the god Skanda. To him he is not only a god of cunning and roguery but also a god who is truly benevolent. Some of the names like Mahīpati or Pināākasena given to Skanda in this work are not found elsewhere

We have already noticed that in the later Vedic period Skanda was regarded as a member of the Hindu pantheon. The testimony of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* has already been quoted above. In the period of the composition of the Sūtra or the Vedāṅga literature Skanda-Kārttikeya appears as one of the important deities. This will be evident from the various names by which he is designated by the poets of the Sūtra

works. The entire Sūtra literature, as has been noticed above, is generally placed between 600 B. C. and 200 B. C.[16] In the *Hiraṇyakeśin Gṛhyasūtra* (2. 8. 19) Skanda is mentioned along with Viṣṇu, Rudra and others. There cannot be any doubt that, by the time this work was composed, Skanda was looked upon as one of the well-known gods. The fact that he is associated with Rudra and Viṣṇu (the two supreme deities of the Hindu pantheon) in the above-mentioned work goes far to show that he had firmly entrenched himself in the hearts of the devotees. We are further told in the same passage that all these gods including Skanda should be worshipped at *tarpaṇa*. In the *Baudhāyana Dharma Śāstra* (also styled as Sūtra) several names of this deity have been enumerated[17]. It discloses the following names of the deity—Sanatkumāra, Skanda, Ṣaṇmukha, Viśākha, Mahāsena and Subrahmaṇya. The last mentioned name is most interesting as it is the popular name of the god in Southern India. The same work further mentions the male and female attendants of the god who are so elaborately described in the Great Epic It is, of course, true that the gods are mentioned separately, but it would be wiser to regard them as different forms of the deity Skanda. The *Chāndogya* passage, quoted above, identifies Skanda with Sanatkumāra ; the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, as we have already noticed, mentions both Ṣaṇmukha and Mahāsena ; regarding the name Viśākha it might be pointed out epigraphically the name is as old as the 3rd century B. C.[18] There cannot be any doubt, therefore, that at the time of the composition of the *Baudhāyana Dharma Śāstra* some of the Skanda's popular names were known. Reference to his male and female attendants amply testifies to his solid popularity. The testimony of this work shows that the worship of this god was practised before 400 B. C.

According to Winternitz[19] the name Nejameṣa which occurs in one of the *Khilas* of the *Rv.*[20] is no other than the god Naigameya—an aspect of Skanda-Kārttikeya mentioned in the Great Epic and other Purāṇas. This *Khila* occurs after Ṛv. X 184 (see also Chapter six). Here Nejameṣa is pictured as a son-granting deity. The name also occurs in several

Gṛhya Sūtras.[21] Everywhere in these Sūtras Nejameṣa is addressed by persons who are desirous of sons.

In the *Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra* the vindictive aspect of the god is also mentioned. Here Kumāra (i.e. Skanda) appears as a demon harassing infants.[22] In the epic and Purāṇic literature, as we will see afterwards, this aspect of the god is not forgotten.

The testimony of the Sūtra literature, therefore, indicates that some of the important characteristics of the god were known at the time of their composition. The *Skandayāga* which was probably composed at the time of tha Sūtra literature (as noted earlier), describes his *Dhūrta* or Rogue-aspect—a characteristic also mentioned in later literature. He was both a friend and foe of the children. As Nejameṣa he could grant the boon of son to barren women and as Kumāra he used to harass the new-born babes. His association with Sanatkumāra referred to in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* indicates his connexion with penance and learning—a characteristic repeatedly mentioned in later literature.

The above discussion makes it abundantly clear that Skanda-Kārttikeya became a considerably popular god by the time the latest portions of the Vedic literature came to be written. This popularity he maintained during the time of composition of epic and Purāṇic works.

NOTES

1 See Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 60.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 98

3 See *The Decan College Research Institute*, Vol. IX, p. 210.

4 6.97.1 ; 16.9.1 ; 3.1.1 ; 3.1.2 ; 3.1.6 ; 8.8.1 ; 8.8.3 ; 8.8.24.

5 See Macdonell, *op. cit.*, p. 97 ; see also *Rv.* 10.91.3 ; 10.21.5 ; 2.5.3 ; 1.96.1 ; 8.91.8 ; 4.11.3.

6 A special 'army-fire' *Senāgni* is mentioned in the *Kauṣ. Br.* 60 5 and scholion to the *Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra*, 1.10. The preparation of such a fire is mentioned at *Kauṣ Br.* 16.9. ff (see *S.B.E.*, Vol. XLII, pp. 325-6).

7 *Kāṇḍa*, 5, *Adhyāya*, 1, *Brāhmaṇa* 13, Verse, 18.

8 See *Indo-Iranica*, Vol. IV, No. 1, p. 27.

9 See J. N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, (2nd edition), pp. 576-7.

10 Scholars are unanimous in regarding this part of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* as a later addition. There is every reason to believe that the above-mentioned *Gāyatrī Mantras* were composed during the period of the composition of the epics and the Purāṇas.

11 7.26.2—*taṃ Skanda ityācakṣyate* ; see also Kane, *History of Dharma Sāstra*, Vol. V, p. 1581.

12 See *Pariśiṣtas of the Atharvaveda* edited by Bolling and Negelein (1909), pp. 128-35 ; see also Proceedings of American Oriental Society 1890, pp. V-XIII included in Vol. XV of *J.A.O.S.*

13 Cf. *Viṣṇudharmottara*, III, 71.5 where among other weapons of Skanda we have *ghaṇṭā* and *patākā-Vaijayantī*.

14 *"Dhanadhānyakulān bhogān sa me vacanavedanaṃ / dāsīdāsaṃ tathā sthānāṃ maṇiratnaṃ surañjanaṃ / ye bhaktyā bhagavān Dhūrtaṃ brahmaṇyaṃ ca yasaśvinaṃ / sarve te dhanavantaḥ syuḥ prajāvanto yaśasvinaḥ.* (5.2-3)". "Wealth, grain, herds, enjoyments, let him grant me, speech and knowledge, male and female slaves as well, status, a jewel, a betel-nut tree. Those who with piety, blesssed one, worship the holy and honourable Dhūrta, may well have wealth, offspring and honour" (Goodwin's translation).

15 See also G. W. Cox, *Aryan Mythology*, pp. 61 ff, 446 ff.

16 See Macdonell, A *History of Sanskrit Literature*, pp, 206 ff.

17 This work, according to such an authority as Macdonell, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-19) was composed before *the Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra* which is assigned by Bühler to about 400 B.C. This great Vedic authority further points out that the language of this work is certainly more archaic than that of the other Sūtras.

18 See *infra*.

19 *J. R. A. S.*, 1895, pp. 149-55.

20 Max Müller, Vol. IV, p. 540.

21 See *Āpastamba*, I, 12 ; *Mānava* II. 18 ; *Āśvalāyana* 1. 14. 3 and *Śāṅkhāy*, 1. 22. 7.

22 *S. B. E.*, Vol. XIX, 1. 16. 24.

CHAPTER TWO

Skanda-Kārttikeya in the Epics and the Purāṇas

In the Epics : The Great Epic, in its present form, contains several chapters where Kārttikeya's birth and exploits are elaborately described. The birth of this deity is also described in two chapters of the *Bālakāṇḍa* of the Lesser Epic.

In the *Mahābhārata* the stories of the birth and exploits of Kārttikeya are told in three different places. The first story appears in the *Vanaparvan* (Chs. 223 to 232)[1]; the second is preserved in the *Śalyaparvan* (Chs. 44-46) ; the 3rd and the last account is found in chapters 84-86 of the *Anuśāsanaparvan*. The *Rāmāyaṇa* has two chapters on Kārttikeya's birth in the *Bālakāṇḍa* (Chs. 36-37). There are other interesting references to this god in several places of the Great Epic and in some places of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Of all these four accounts that of the *Vanaparvan* is the most exhaustive, and there is reason to believe that the three other accounts (of *Śalya*, *Anuśāsana* and *Bālakāṇḍa*) are in some way or other affected by the *Vanaparvan* account of Kārttikeya's birth and exploits.

The story of Kārttikeya's birth, as given in the *Vanaparvan*, may be summarised thus : In ancient times the gods and the Asuras were very active in destroying one another. The latter often succeeded in humbling the pride of the gods. Indra, their king was, therefore, very much anxious to find out a mighty *senāpati* for the heavenly hosts," I must find out a mighty person who observing the ranks of the celestial army shattered by the Dānavas will be able to reorganise it with vigour."[2] The king of the gods then repaired to the Mānasa mountain and was there absorbed in deep thought, when he suddenly heard the cries of a beautiful woman who was on the point of being kidnapped by a demon named Keśin. After a stiff fight Indra succeeded in freeing the lady from the demon's clutch. On enquiry he learnt that the lady was a daughter of Prajāpati (i.e. Brahmā) and she gave her name as Devasenā. "O lord of the celestials, I desire that thou

shouldst select an invincible husband for me" said she ; on being asked what sort of husband she would like to have, she gave the following reply, "That manly and famous and powerful being devoted to Brahmā, who is able to conquer all the celestials, Asuras, Yakṣas, Kinnaras, Uragas, Rākṣasas and the evil-minded Daityas and to subdue all the worlds with thee, shall be my husband".[3] Indra was grieved, thinking there was no such husband for her. "Then Indra saw the Sun rising from the Udaya hill and the Soma entering the Sun on the new-moon day at the Raudra *muhūrta*, and the gods and Asuras fighting on the Udaya mountain, the morning twlight tinged with red clouds, the sea blood-red ; Bhṛgus and Aṅgirasas offered oblations, and Agni took the oblations and entered the Sun, whilst the Sun was entering the 24th *parvan*, and Sindhu was flowing with a current of fresh blood". The king of the gods thought that if now Soma or Agni begot a son, he might become the husband of that remarkable lady. Then they went to Brahmā's place who promised that it should be as Indra had thought ; then Indra, with Devasenā went to the place where the *Ṛṣis* lived and the gods also came thither to drink and receive their shares of offerings, and the Adbhuta fire came from the solar disc and made over the offerings to the gods. The Fire-god saw the sleeping wives of the Ṛṣis and fell in love.

He was, however, baffled in his efforts to win the love of these women. Svāhā, the daughter of Dakṣa, had formed a strong passion for that god. Knowing Agni's weakness for the Ṛṣis' wives, she disguised herself as Śivā the wife of Aṅgirā. This stratagem paid ; before long she conceived ; she then went to the White mountain infested with terrible-looking beasts. There she threw out Agni's semen into a golden lake. And then assuming successively the forms of the wives of the other Ṛṣis she continued to dally with Agni. Svāhā, however, failed to assume the form of Arundhatī on account of the latter's devotion to her husband. "And the lady Svāhā on the first lunar day threw six times into that lake the semen of Agni. And then it produced a male child endowed with great power" and from the fact of its being cast

off (*skanna*) the child came to be called by the name Skanda. The boy was six-headed and it first assumed a form on the second lunar day and on the third day it became a little child.[4]

The acccount of Kārttikeya's birth as given in the *Bālakāṇḍa* (Chs. 36.37), can thus be summarised : Formerly after his marriage Śitikaṇṭha (Śiva) beholding the goddess began to indulge in connubial love. A thousand years passed while they were still engaged in sexual love-play. Other gods, being alarmed at the prospect of the formidable character of the issue, requested Mahādeva to desist from sexual activity. The latter consented but asked what would become of the seed he had already produced. Agni along with Vāyu was then asked to enter into the seed. Agni agreed and as a result a white mountain was produced. The gods then worshipped Śiva and Umā but could not save themselves from the wrath of the infuriated Devī, who imprecated sterility on all their wives. The next chapter relates the birth of Kārttikeya. While Śiva was performing austerity, the other gods went to Brahmā and asked him for a formidable general of the gods. Brahmā said that on account of the Devī's curse no son could be born to any of their wives, but Agni could produce a son on the river Ākāśagaṅgā. Agni accordingly impregnated the latter, who gave birth to Kārttikeya, so called because he was nursed by six Kṛttikās[5].

The story of Kārttikeya's birth as given in the *Śalya* (Ch. 44) and *Anuśāsana* (Chs. 84 f) *parvans* does not differ substantially from the account of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The *Śalya* account is summarised below :—

In days of yore the vital seed of Maheśvara fell into the blazing fire. Agni, who was consumer of everything, could not burn the industrictible seed. He, however, could not bear within himself the seed of mighty energy. At the command of Brahmā Agni, approaching Gaṅgā, threw into her the seed. She, too was unable to hold it. Gaṅgā cast it on the Himavat. Thereupon Agni's son began to grow there. The mighty offspring soon overwhelmed the three worlds by his energy. Meanwhile (the six) Kṛttikās beheld that high-

souled son of Agni. Then they cried together, "This child is mine, this child is mine". Understanding the state of their minds, the boy Skanda sucked the breasts of all of them, having assumed six mouths. He then divided himself into four forms viz. Skanda, Śākha, Viśākha and Naigameya for the satisfaction of Rudra, Uṁā, Gaṅgā and Agni.

The *Anuśāsana* account, though somewhat similar to those of the *Śalyaparvan* and the *Bālakāṇḍa*, is more interesting. After the wedding of Rudra and Devī on Himavat, all the gods fearing that Rudra's offspring would consume the worlds requested him to withdraw his vital seed (whence he is called Ūrdhvaretas) ; Umā cursed the gods saying that they would become sonless, but Agni was not present. A small quantity of Rudra's seed fell into the fire and began to develop ; meanwhile the gods were scorched by the notorious and powerful demon Tāraka and all of them became sorely afflicted. That demon soon became the lord of the three worlds and the gods took to their heels. They then went to Brahmā's place and asked for a mighty commander-in-chief. Brahmā said that as Agni was not cursed, his issue would be able to destroy that infamous demon. But Agni was nowhere to be found ; a mighty search was then made for him. A frog, who was scorched by the energy of Agni, appeared on the surface of the water and informed that Agni was now under the water. The god then leaving the spot, cursed the frogs saying that they would be without taste. An elephant then informed the gods that Agni was now residing within a certain *Aśvattha* tree ; and all the elephants too, were cursed and their tongues were bent back. Agni was then revealed by a parrot who thereupon lost his power of speech. The gods then requested Agni to beget a heroic son who would save them from Tāraka's tyranny. Agni then spiritually united with Gaṅgā, and then latter, unable to bear the powerful seed of Agni, threw it on Meru. That foetus having fallen on a thicket of reeds, assumed a beautiful form. The six Kṛttikās then reared it as their son, whence it came to be known as Kārttikeya.[6]

In the 86th Chapter of the same *parvan* of the *Mahābhārata*

a more realistic account is given. Agni united with Kṛttikās and became sexually satisfied. His energy was then divided into six portions and a portion was placed in each of the Kṛttikās. All of them were delivered at the same time, and the six portions united into one. The earth then received the child from a heap of gold. He then grew up in the Śaravana reared by the Kṛttikās.

We find, therefore, that while there is substantial similarity between the second, third and the fourth account, that of the *Vanaparvan* stands alone. The :stories of *Śalya*, *Anuśāsana* and *Bālakaṇḍa* consistently make Kārttikeya the son of all the five deities—i.e. Śiva, Agni, Gaṅgā, Umā and Kṛttikās. It is apparent that the authors of these accounts were not much sure about the parentage of Skanda and, therefore, thought it prudent to give the honour of parenthood to all the above-mentioned deities. The author of the *Vanaparvan* account had no such hesitation. He has, therefore, consistently represented Kārttikeya as the son of the Fire-god by Svāhā. We can, therefore, infer that in his time, there was only one tradition about Kārttikeya's birth, and this tradition he faithfully records. In course of time and with the increase of Skanda's popularity there developed various other traditions. The internal evidence thus makes *Vanaparvan's* account earlier than other three accounts. So it can be safely asserted that originally Skanda-Kārttikeya was looked upon as a form of the Fire-god. The testimony of ŚB noted before also supports our contention. In this connexion we quote the following lines from the *Vanaparvan* account : "Mārkaṇḍeya continued, 'O sinless scion of Kuru's race, I have described to thee various branches of the race of Agni ; listen now to the story of the birth of the intelligent Kārttikeya—I shall tell thee of that wonderful and famous and highly energetic son of the Adbhuta Fire begotten of the wives of *Brahmarṣis*."[7]

The following lines of the *Vāyu Purāṇa* which occur with some variations in most of the Purāṇas[8] and the *Ādiparvan* of the Great Epic[9] also strengthen our argument :—

Skandaḥ Sanatkumārśca jajñe pādena tejasaḥ ।
Agniputraḥ Kumārastu śarastambe vyajāyata ॥
tasya Śākho Viśākhaśca Naigameyaśca pṛṣṭhajāḥ[10] ।

The Viṣṇu gives a somewhat different reading of the above-quoted lines—

"*Agniputraḥ Kumārastu śarastambe vyajāyata* ।
tasya Śākho Viśākhaśca Naigameyaśca pṛṣṭajāḥ ॥
apatyaṃ Kṛttikānāṃ tu Kārttikeya iti smṛtaḥ".[11]

The above-quoted lines of the Viṣṇu *Purāṇa* occur without any variation in other Purāṇas and the *Mahābharata*. As the lines occur in the Purāṇic account of the origin of gods, and as they are found in most of the early Purāṇas and also the *Mahābhārata*, we may readily believe that they contain the original tradition. Here Kārttikeya is expressly called *Agniputra* and Śākha, Viśākha and Naigameya are described as brothers (*Pṛṣṭhajāh*) of Skanda-Kārttikeya. It should further be noted that the line—*Apatyaṃ Kṛttikānāṃ tu Kārttikeya iti smṛtaḥ* is not found in the *Vāyu* and *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas* where we get this line instead—

Skandaḥ Sanatkumāraśca jajñe pādena tejasaḥ. Applying the rule of elimination we get the two common lines—

"*Agniputraḥ Kumārastu śarastambe vyajāyata* ।
tasya Śākho Viśākhaśca Naigameyaśca prsṭhajāḥ ॥

As the *Vanaparvan* faithfully pictures Skanda-Kārttikeya as Agni's son we can be sure about the authenticity as well as the antiquity of this tradition. In this connection it should also be pointed out that the list containing Skanda's various names in the same *parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* begins with the significant name Āgneya (i.e. Agni's son). Such names as Pāvaki[12], Pāvakātmaja[13] and Vahninandana[14] also connect him with the Fire-god.

In the later period the question of Skanda's parentage became almost an enigma. This is proved by the following *śloka* of the *Ādiparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*[15]—

"*Āgneyaḥ Kṛttikāputro Raudro Gāṅgeya ityapi* ।
śruyate bhagavān devaḥ sarvaguhyamayo Guhaḥ" ॥

"the illustrious deity Guha combines in his composition the portions of all other deities is of a lineage unknown. Some call him the offspring of Agni, some of the Kṛttikās, some of Rudra and some of Gaṅgā".[16] These lines almost sound like the words of the *Skandayāga* quoted earlier. The later poets were obsessed by this dilemma and so they have tried to describe him as the son of all those deities[17]. The intrusion of the Śiva-element in the later accounts may be explained by the vast popularity of that god from the Gupta age.[18] Even in the *Śalya* account Kārttikeya is consistently called *Agni-putra* or *Vahninandana* or *Analātmaja*. The *Śalya* account, as we have already noticed, represents Skanda both as the son of Agni and Rudra. We also notice in this account the disappearance of Svāhā. Here she is replaced by Gaṅgā. This is also the case with the *Bālakāṇḍa* account. In one of the inscriptions of Nāgārjunikonda[19] (assigned to the third Century A. D. on palaeographical grounds) Kārttikeya is given the epithet *Hutavahatanaya* (i.e. son of Agni). This inscription is certainly older than many of the Purāṇas. Aśvaghoṣa in his *Buddhacarita* (*circa* 1st Century A. D.) also describes Skanda as Agni's son.[20]

Position of Skanda-Kārttikeya in the Epics—By the time the two Epics were compiled Skanda became a favourite god of the Indians. This is proved not only by the repeated references to his exploits in various places of the Epics (particularly in the Great Epic) but also by the manner in which his name is mentioned along with other gods in these two Epics. As a matter of fact, more verses have been devoted to him in the Great Epic than to any other god (Viṣṇu and Śiva excepted). No less than sixteen chapters of the Great Epic (ten in the *Vana*, three in the *Śalya*, and three in the *Anuśāsana*) have been monopolised by this god; there are numerous other references to him in various places of the *Mahābhārata*. It is also interesting to note that Pṛthūdaka which has been eulogised as the greatest of all the *tīrthas* in the *Vanaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* is described as particularly sacred to this god.[21] The three well-known accounts of his birth and exploits, in three different places of the *Mahābhārata*, were certainly

composed by three separate poets of three different periods. This is proved not only by the conflicting accounts of his birth, but also of his exploits in these three accounts. It is highly interesting to note that the 'Tāraka-episode' is conspicuous by its absence in the *Vanaparvan* account, where he is depicted as the destroyer of the demon Mahiṣa, the arch-enemy of the gods. In the *Śalya* account the killing of all the Asuras including Mahiṣa and Tāraka has been briefly described. In the *Anuśāsana* story he appears only as the-destroyer of Tārakāsura. We have elsewhere pointed out that Skanda became Tārakāri at a somewhat later date.

In the *Vanaparvan* account Skanda's rivalry with Indra has been vividly described. After his birth Kārttikeya started displaying his strength and prowess. The celestials became alarmed and asked Indra to kill Skanda without delay and said, "And if thou dost not exterminate him, he will conquer the three worlds with ourselves and overpowering thee, himself become the mighty lord of the celestials." Indra at first hesitated, as he was not sure about the outcome of his fight with Skanda ; but he could not consume the insults which were soon hurled at him by the other deities and decided rather unwillingly to declare war against Kārttikeya. The heavenly host was soon routed by the new-born god. The king of the gods than hurled his thunderbolt at Skanda which pierced him on the right side ; but this resulted only in the creation of a new god (Viśākha) who came out of the right side of Skanda.[22] Thus badly defeated he was compelled to seek Skanda's protection "With the palm of his hands joined together" (*bhayādindrastu taṃ Skandaṃ prāñjaliḥ śaraṇaṃ gataḥ*). The disgraced Indra then acknowledged Skanda's superiority. Kārttikeya was then requested by the gods and *Ṛṣis* (including Indra) to become the king of the celestials. The boy-god was, however, modest enough to turn their request and agreed instead to become the Commander-in-Chief of the heavenly army.

The story which has been briefly noticed above, shows the growing power and prestige of Skanda-Kārttikeya. It is difficult to say when this particular portion of the *Vanaparvan*

was composed, but it can be reasonably asserted that this account was compiled before the Christian era. We believe, that we shall not be much wrong in placing the date of this account between the third and the second Century B. C.

In the *Śalyaparvan* account[23] Kārttikeya's intimate relationship with the 'mothers' has been repeatedly referred to. A very large number of such mother has been mentioned in this connection. It is a well-known fact mother-worship was in vogue in the days of Mohenjadaro.[24]

We have a pretty exhaustive list of his names in chapter 231 of the *Vanaparvan*. The list contains more than fifty names of the War-god.[25] The very existence of such a list indirectly proves his vast popularity at the time of the composition of this part of the *Vanaparan* [26] We have reference to the twelve-armed image of this god in the *Mahābhārata* (XII.122.32—*Kumāraṃ dvādaśabhujaṃ*), We have also an indirect reference to the two-armed image of Kārttikeya holding *Śakti* (spear) and *ghaṇṭā* (bell) in the *Anuśasānaparvan*[27] (see *infra*).

It appears from the *Mahābhārata* XII.153.76 that Kārttikeya was regarded as one of the four principal gods, *viz*. Rudra, Kumāra, Brahmā and Viṣṇu, We have already referred to the *Rāmāyaṇa* story of his birth. He is mentioned in some other places of the Lesser Epic. There is a reference to a temple of Kārttikeya in the Third Book[28] of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. In another place of the same work[29] Skanda and Viśākha are referrred to as Agni's sons.[30] It is also of some interest to note that the name 'Tāraka' is entirely absent in the Lesser Epic.

More than once in the Great Epic the War-god is termed as *Yogīśvara* or *Mahayogī* ; this aspect of the War-god will be discussed in a later chapter. His *Dhūrta* aspect (referred to in the *Skandayāga*) is, however, ignored in either of the Epics.

In some places of the *Mahàbhārata* Skanda is associated with Ambikā or Umā ; he is more than once called *Pārvatīnandana* ;[31] but these references are surely later instrusions. The god is also repeatedly compared with the Sun-god in

several places of the Great Epic. We will have something more to say on this point afterwards.

Skanda-Kārttikeya in the Purāṇas—The birth and exploits of Kārttikeya are described in different places of the various Purāṇas. It is difficult to determine, with any degree of certainty, the date of the composition of any one of the Purāṇas. We will, however, follow Dr. Hazra's 'dates'[32] which are generally accepted as tentative[33]. While utilizing the Purāṇic accounts we will not make any distinction between the *Mahā* and the *Upapurāṇas*, as some of the *Upa-purāṇas* are historically as genuine and trustworthy as any one of the *Mahāpurāṇas*.[34]

The *Vāyu*, which is regarded as one of the oldest Purāṇas,[35] describes Skanda's birth and exploits in Chapter 72 (verses 20-50). This account is more or less similar to the account given in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (1, Chs. 36-37) and the *Śalyaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* ; a summary of the *Vāyu Purāṇa* account of Skanda's birth is given below :—

Formerly Śaṅkara and Śaṅkarī were engaged in the act of sexual intercourse for several thousand years ; this process continued for a long time, but no son was produced. The wily Indra then sent Agni to destroy the fruit of their labour. As a result Śiva's semen (missing its mark) fell on the ground. This was greatly resented by the infuriated Devī who ordered Agni to consume the semen. The latter had no other alternative but to bear that unusual load. The Fire-god bore that thing for several thousand years and then it was transferred to Gaṅgā, who too, could not bear that 'energy' for a long time. She then relieved herself of that burden in the Śaravana and thus Skanda was born. As he was nursed by the Kṛttikās he came to be called Kārttikeya (72.42). We have already noticed that in another place of this Purāṇa Skanda is emphatically called *Agniputra* (66.24) ; elsewhere he is connected with Umā (54.19) ; in another place of the same Purāṇa (27.53) Skanda is described as a son of Paśupati by Svāhā. He also receives the epithet '*Jāhnavīsuta* (son of Gaṅgā) in the *Vāyu* (72.34).

The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[36] has no separate story to tell about Skanda's birth. In 1.15.116 (noticed above) Skanda and his brothers Viśākha, Śākha and Naigameya are described as the sons of Agni by Kṛttikās. In 1.8.11 the god is, however, described as the son of Agni by Svāhā thus confirming the account of the *Vanaparvan*.

The story of Skanda's birth and exploits as given in the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* is the same as that of the *Vāyu*; most of the verses found in the *Vāyu* account are also found in this work (III.10.35-48).[37]

In Chapters 158-60 of the *Matsya Purāṇa*[38] a detailed story about Kārttikeya's birth and achievements is found. The story is nothing but a romantic elucidation of the account given in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Śalyaparvan*. We are giving below the summary of this story :—

The celestials sent Agni to the pleasure-garden of Śiva and Pārvatī. The Fire-god found the couple locked in the deepest embrace. Seeing Agni Śaṅkara grew furious, and asked him to drink the semen he had already discharged. Other gods too, were forced to swallow that thing. After some time the semen burst out from their bodies and as a result a beautiful lake was created. Soon the lake was filled with smiling lilies and the birds began to twitter. One day the goddess Pārvatī, becoming curious, went to take her bath in that golden lake. After revelling for quite a long time in the water she put on a beatiful lotus on her head and desired to taste the water of that beautiful lake. Just at that time the Kṛttikās came over to that place carrying some water with them. The goddess then wanted to drink that water. She was allowed to drink that water on condition that the son who would be born to her, should also be known as their child and be named after them ; after a short time Pārvatī became pregnant. Before long a wonderful child came out from her right side. The golden rays which emanated from his body filled the three worlds. He looked like the morning Sun.

The *Vāmana Purāṇa*[39] describes Kārttikeya as the son of Agni by Kuṭilā. In Chapter 57 of this Purāṇa a detailed account of Skanda's birth is found ; according to this story Agni had to carry Śiva's semen for five thousand years and

then Kuṭilā (another daughter of Himālaya) for another 5000 years. The story is somewhat interesting and is not found elsewhere. In no other Purāṇa Skanda-Kārttikeya appears as the son of Agni by Kuṭilā.

A philosophical explanation of the origin of Skanda is attempted in Chapter 25 of the *Varāha Purāṇa*.[40] From the union of Prakṛti (Umā) and Puruṣa (Śiva) is born *Ahaṃkāra*. This *Ahaṃkāra* is described as the highest *tattva* (*parama tattva*). According to the poet Kārttikeya represents this *Ahaṃkāra*. The poet further admits in verse 34 of the same Chapter that the story of the origin of Skanda has been described differently in different ages :—

Utpattistasya rājendra bahurūpā vyavasthitā ।
manvantareṣvanekeṣu devasenāpateḥ kila. ॥

A simple and vivid account of Skanda's birth is given in Chapter 228 of the 1st *khaṇḍa* of the *Viṣṇudharmottora Purāṇa*.[41] This account contains no new information. It generally follows the tradition recorded in the *Anuśāsana* and the *Śalyaparvan* of the Great Epic.

In the *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa*[42] (*madhya khaṇḍa*, Ch. 23) we are confronted with a somewhat different story. Here the culprits are the few Brāmaṇas (*vipras*) who were sent by the gods to disturb Śiva's pleasure in Ilāvṛta. Seeing the *vipras*, Pārvatī naturally became ashamed and hastily covered up her naked body. The dissatisfied Śiva then cursed both the *vipras* and the particular place which thenceforth became inaccessible to all.

Chapter 128 of the *Brahma Purāṇa*[43] gives us the traditional account of Kārttikeya's birth ; but the poet here makes the story somewhat readable by infusing into it some element of humour. When Agni is asked by the gods to enter into Śaṅkara's pleasure-garden, he at first refuses and gives the following reply—

Na gantavyaṃ tatra deśe daṃpatyoḥ sthitayo rahaḥ ।
sāmānyamātrato nyāyaḥ kiṃ punaḥ Śūlapāṇini ; ॥

but the gods refuse to listen to any such logic ; they believe in the adage 'Necessity knows no law'—'*Mahabhaye cānugate*

nyāyaḥ ko'nyatra varṇate. Agni then unwillingly enters into Śiva's place. The rest of the story is similar to those of the other Purāṇas. Some of the verses of the *Brahma Purāṇa* are also found in the *Saura Purāṇa* (Ch. 60). It, however, gives a more detailed account than the *Brahma Purāṇa*.

The story of Kārttikeya's birth as given in Chapter 19 of the *Jñānasaṃhitā* of the *Śiva Purāṇa* is almost similar to the account given in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Vāyu Purāṇa*. Here, of course, we get no mention of Kṛttikās who are replaced by six *rājakanyās* (princesses). As Skanda had sucked the breasts of all the six *rājakanyās*, so he came to be known as Ṣaṇmātura. A detailed story of Skanda's birth and exploits is given in Chapters 1-12 of the *Kumāra khaṇḍa* which forms the 4th part of the Second Book of this Purāṇa. The account is nothing but an inflated version of the story of the *Vāyu Purāṇa*.

In some other Purāṇas like the *Bhaviṣya* (*Brāhmaparvan*, Chapter, 39) and the *Brahmavaivarta* (*Gaṇeśakhaṇḍa*, Chapters, 14-17) we get stories regarding Kārttikeya's birth ; but as the accounts are conventional, we will ignore them.

The stories of Kārttikeya's birth and exploits figure prominently in various places of the voluminous *Skanda Purāṇa*.[44] MM. Kane's assertion [45] that the god Skanda does. not figure prominently in this Purāṇa, named after him, is totally erroneous. As a matter of fact, hundreds of verses of this Purāṇa are devoted to this god. As in the *Mahābhārata* Kārttikeya's birth and exploits are described in as many as five different places (*viz.* in Chapters 27 ff. of the *Kedārakhaṇḍa* which is included in the *Māheśvarakhaṇḍa*; in Chapters 29ff. of *Kumārikakhaṇḍa* of the same *Māheśvarakhaṇḍa* which is the 1st Book of this Purāṇa ; Chapter 34 of the *Avantikṣetramāhātmya* of the 5th Book of this Purāṇa ; in Chapters 70-71 of the *Nāgarakhaṇḍa* and Chapter 246 of the same *khaṇḍa*). Besides these accounts, there are other innumerable references to this god and the *tīrthas* sacred to him in this Purāṇa.

The first account is not far different from that of the *Vāyu Purāṇa* ; but here we are told that not only Agni but other gods too, had to swallow Śiva's semen, and all of them were

consequently impregnated. The celestials, in dire distress, went to Mahādeva, once more, at Viṣṇu's behest with the request to spare them from that great trouble. They were advised by that god to vomit it out, and with the exception of Agni all other gods succeeded in getting rid of that unusual load. The Fire-god went to a lake to cool himself. There he was seen by the six wives of the *Ṛṣis* (Arundhatī excepted). Then they came near the Fire-god and were warmed by him. This resulted in all of them being impregnated at the same time. These women, thereafter, went to Himagiri and lightened their burden on that mountain. The deceived husbands promptly cursed their wives and transformed them into stars. The seed then fell into the Ganges, and there Kārttikeya was born.

The second story is almost similar to the first one, and the only difference is that it is more confusing. The third account is influenced by the story of the *Matsya Purāṇa*. The culprit in the fourth account is Vāyu instead of Agni ; but otherwise the story is similar to those noticed above. The fifth account too, tells us nothing new.

In some non-Purāṇic works like the *Kumārasambhavam* and the *Kathāsaritsāgara* we get descriptions of Skanda's birth. The story in the first-mentioned work is too well-known to be repeated here. In the *Kathāsaritsāgara* the story is found in theThird Book.[46] The poet Somadeva has faithfully followed the *Anuśāsana* account of Kārttikeya's birth.

Most of the Purāṇic stories, discussed above, are in some way or other affected by the accounts found in the Great Epic.[47] The Agni element has been gradually replaced by that of Śiva. By the time the latest Purāṇas were composed, Agni was almost forgotten with Kārttikeya becoming a member of the Śiva family. The later accounts are much more confusing than the earlier ones, especially those recorded in the voluminious *Skanda Purāṇa*.

Position of Skanda-Kārttikeya in the Purāṇas :—We have seen that in the Epics Skanda-Kārttikeya is glorified as one of the prominent deities. In the Purāṇas also he appears not as an insignificant god. The various stories about his

origin, which have been briefly noticed above, indirectly demonstrate his popularity.

In both the Epics and the Purāṇas Kārttikeya is repeatedly compared with the Sun-god. In the *Vanaparvan* (Chapter 224) we are told that the child Kārttikeya shone like the 'Sun rising in the midst of red clouds'. Such descriptions are found everywhere in the *Vanaparvan* nnd other places of the *Mahābhārata*. Some of his names included in the 'list of names' in Chapter 231 of the *Vanaparvan* suggest his connection with the Sun-god, *viz*. Dīptakīrti, Dīptavarṇa, Dīptaśakti etc. In the Purāṇas his connection with the Sun-god is all the more intimate ; in line 34 of Chapter 72 of the *Vāyu Purāṇa* we get—*Ādityaśatasaṅkāśo mahātejāḥ pratāpavān* ; the epithet *Ādityaśatasaṅkāśaḥ* is found in almost all the Purāṇas. The *Brahmāṇḍa* has the epithet *Dvādaśārkapratāpavān* ; the *Śiva* (*Kailāśa Saṃhitā*, 6. 19) has *Udayādityaśatasaṅkāśam* ; in the *Matsya* we have *Arkapratīmaprābhāya* (159.14). Such epithets also appear in Chapter 44 of the *Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa*. The name 'Skanda' is included in the list of Sūrya's 108 names recorded in the *Brahma Purāṇa* (Chapter 33) and also the *Skanda Purāṇa* (VII, Chapter 279).

One of the most usual weapons of this god is *śakti* and this *śakti* according to both the *Mārkaṇḍeya* (105.4) and the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (3. 2. 12) was fashioned by Viśvakarmā from the rays of the Sun. "It is worth noticing that a portion of solar glory was transferred to Skanda".[48] According to the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* Skanda under the name of Srausa was one of the *dvārapālakas* of the Sun-god[49] ; in the *Bhaviṣya* 1.76.13 and 18 we have the form Sroṣa.[50] The name Sroṣa or Sruṣa is referred to as Stosa in the *Śāmba Purāṇa* (6 22 and 7.3 ; also 16.8). Here Stosa appears as one of the gate-keepers of the Sun-god and he is no other than Kārttikeya (*Śāmba*, 16.8). There cannot be any doubt that Sroṣa is the correct form.[51] In the *Bhaviṣya Brāhmaparvan* (124.24) we are told, "as he shines as the commander of the army of the Devas, he is known as Kārttikeya. The root *sru* is used in the sense of going ; to this is added the suffix *sa*. As he goes first, he

is known by the name Sroṣa".[52] This Sroṣa or Srausa is no other than Śraosha Vareja or Sraosa of Zend *Avesta* who is the obedient and watchful messenger of Ahura Mazda. Dr. Sukumar Sen [53] has shown the great similarity between the Iranian deity Śraoṣa and the Indian Skanda. In the *Avesta* cock is the animal sacred to this deity ; in the Epics and the Purāṇas cock is associated with Kārttikeya (see *infra*). Dr. Sen has also drawn our attention to other striking parallels between the characteristics of these two deities. In the *Avesta* Śraoṣa is the killer of the demon Aosma, whereas the Indian god is celebrated as the destroyer of the demon Tāraka.[54] According to Gopinath Rao a *Dhyānaśloka* current in some parts of South India actually describes him as Sūrya.[55]

It is not difficult to explain Kārttikeya's intimate connection with the Sun-god. Not infrequently in the earliest Vedic literature the Sun-god is connected with Agni. As a matter of fact, Sūrya is but another aspect of Agni who was worshipped even in the Indo-European period.[56] As Skanda is connected with Agni from a very early period, so it is not surprising that he should also be connected with Sūrya. As the forms Sroṣa or Srausa are not found in the early works, so it is reasonable to infer that they were borrowed at a later period from the Iranian sources.

We have discussed at length Skanda-Kārttikeya's connection with the Sun-god in the Purāṇas. It is interesting to note that in the Great Epic Kārttikeya is described as *Yogīśvara* (IX. 46. 14). This aspect of the god is not forgotten in the Purāṇas.[57] He is repeatedly referred to as an authority on Veda and *Brahmavidyā*[58] ; the *Vāyu Purāṇa* (Ch. 72) bestows on him the grand epithet *Sarvalokeśvaraprabhu*.

Skanda is extolled in the highest terms in the following lines of the *Matsya Purāṇa*—

Jaya atulaśaktidīdhitipiñjara
Bhujadaṇḍacaṇḍaraṇaravasa
Sukhada kumudakānanavikāsanendo
Kumāra jaya ditijakula mahodadhivaḍavānala
Ṣaṇmukha madhuravamayūratha
Suramukuṭakoṭighaṭṭita caraṇa navāṅkuramahāsana

Jaya lalitacūḍa kalāpanavavimaladala
Kamalakānta daityavaṃśaduḥsahadāvānala
JayaViśākha vibho jaya sakalalokatāraka
Skanda jaya Gaurīnandana ghaṇṭāpriya
PriyaViśākha vibho dhṛtapatākāprakīrṇa
Paṭalakanakabhūṣaṇabhāsura dinakaracchāya
(159.40-42)

In the same Chapter of the *Matsya Purāṇa* we read—

"*Namaḥ Kumārāya mahāprabhāya*
Skandāya ca skanditadānavāya
Navārkavidyuddyutaye namo'stute
Namo'stu te Ṣaṇmukha kāmarūpa
Pinaddhanānābharaṇāya bhartre
Namo raṇe dāruṇadāruṇāya
Namo'stu te'rkapratīmaprabhāya
Namo'stu guhyāya Guhāya tubhyam (13-14)

Some of the above quoted lines of the *Matsya Purāṇa* are repeated in Chapter 44 of the *Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa*.

Skanda gets the title *Jagataṃ nātha* in the *Matsya* (159.22). It is also of some interest to note that his *Dhūrta* aspect described in the *Skandayāga* and confirmed by the *Mṛcchakaṭika* is not indicated in any one of the Purāṇas. In some later Purāṇas, however, this god is pictured as a true Romeo (see *infra*). The *Śiva Purāṇa* calls him *Vijñānamṛtavāridhi*. The same Purāṇa also calls him *Sarvaśaktidharaprabhu*. References to the worship of the images of Skanda are found in the *Matsya*, *Agni*, *Śiva* and *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇas* (see *infra*).

The above discussion has clearly demonstrated the fact that during the epic and the Purāṇic period Skanda was a highly popular and favourite deity. The Purāṇic poets regarded him not only as a god of War, but also as a god of Wisdom. The fact that a voluminous and important Purāṇa came to be named after him indirectly testifies to his solid popularity. In size the *Skanda Purāṇa* is second only to the Great Epic. In the next Chapter we shall endeavour to trace the historical development of his worship from the earliest times.

NOTES

1 Cf. the Gita Press edition and the Poona edition of the Great Epic; Chapters 186-195 of the edition of Haridāsa Siddhāntavāgīśa; Chapters 213-21 of the Critical edition of the Great Epic edited by Sukhthankar and published by *B. O. R. I.*

2 P. C. Roy's translation, Chapter, 222.

3 *Devadānavayakṣāṇāṃ Kinnaroragarakṣasām* ।
jetā yo duṣṭadaityānāṃ mahāvīryo mahābalaḥ ॥
yastu sarvāṇi bhūtāni tvayā saha vijeṣyati ।
sa hi me bhavitā bhartā brahmaṇyaḥ kīrtivardhanaḥ ॥ (*Mbh.*, III. 224.8-9).

4 In Chapter 229 of the *Vanaparvan* we are told, "the Fire-god is called Rudra by Brāhmaṇas, and for this fact Skanda is called the son of Rudra"; *Arcayāmāsa suprīto bhagavān govṛṣadhvajaḥ* ।
Rudramagniṃ dvijāḥ prāhū Rudrasūnustatastu saḥ ॥ There cannot be anydoubt that this passage is a later intrusion, and should not, therefore, be taken seriously.

5 According to Lassen (*Ind. Alt.*, I, p. 701) the account of Kārttikeya is a later interpolation in the *Mahābhārata* as it differs from the account in the *Rāmāyaṇa*; see also *Original Sanskrit Texts* (Muir), Vol. IV, pp. 349 ff; Lassen is correct so far as other three accounts of the *Mahābhārata* are concerned, but the *Vanaparvan* account cannot be later than that of the *Bālakāṇḍa* of the Lesser Epic.

6 This story is faithfully followed by Somadeva (11th cent. A. D.) in his *Kathāsaritsāgara* (III 6. 60-8) edited by Durgaprasad and K. P. Parab; see also Tawney, *The Ocean of Story*, II, pp. 100-3.

7 *Agnīnāṃ vividhā vaṃśāḥ kīrtitāste mayānagha* ।
śṛṇu janma tu Kauravya Kārttikeyasya dhīmataḥ ॥
adbhutasyādbhutaṃ putraṃ pravakṣyāmyamitaujasam ।
jātaṃ Brahmarṣirbhāryābhirbrahmaṇyaṃ kīrtivardhananam ॥
(*Mbh.*, III. 223. 1-2)

8 *Brahmāṇḍa*, III, 3. 24-5; *Matsya*, 5. 26-7; *Śiva, Dharmasaṃhitā*, 54.25; *Brahma*, 3. 40-1; *Padma, Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa*, 6. 26-7; *Garuḍa, Pūrvakhaṇḍa*, 6. 34-5. 9 66. 23-4. 10 66.23-4. 11 1.115-6.

12 III.227.116; and III.231.28. 13 III.227.13 and 227.7.

14 III.231.112.

15 136.13. 16 P. C. Roy's translation.

17 Cf. the *Śalya* and *Anuśāsana* accounts.

18 Hopkins in his characteristic way dismisses the *Vanaparvan* account as 'late and mystical', *Epic Mythology*, p. 229; he, however, concedes "clear is here the posteriority of his (Skanda's) relationship to Śiva".

19 *E. I.*, Vol. XXXIII, pp. 148-9.

20 See *S.B.E.*, Vol. 49(1), Book 1, Verse 66. Elsewhere in the same Book (1.93) he is, however, connected with Bhava, i.e. Śiva.

21 III. 83. 141 ff.

22 *Vajraprahārāt Skandasya saṃjātaḥ puruṣo'paraḥ* ।
yuvā kāñcanasaṃnāhaḥ śaktidhṛgdivyakuṇḍalaḥ ॥
yadvajraviśanājjāto Viśākhastena so'bhavat (III. 227.16-7).

23 Chapter 46.1 ff.

24 See Marshall's monumental work on Mohenjodaro.

25 See *infra*.

26 It is not clear why this list which is found in all the manuscripts of Eastern and Western India is ignored in the Critical edition of the Great Epic published by *B. O. R. I.* The list is, however, found in the Poona, Vangavasi and Gita Press editions of the *Mahābhārata*. In the *B. O. R. I.* edition the list is given in the 'Appendix'.

27 14.278. 28 12.21. 29 I.22.9. 30 *Loc. cit.*

31 Skanda-Kārttikeya is also mentioned in the *Rāmāyāṇa*, II.25.11 ; VII.16.1-2 ; VII.35.22 ; VII.87.10 (see *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa Koṣa* in Hindi by R. K. Rai).

32 See *Studies in the Puranic Records of Hindu Rites and Customs.*

33 Cf. *The Classical Age*, p. 298.

34 See *Studies in the Upa-Purāṇas* (in two Vols.) by Dr. R. C. Hazra.

35 Dr. Hazra (*Studies in the Puranic Rites etc.*, pp. 13-17) places this Purāṇa after 200 A. D., see also *Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. II, pp. 240-70. MM, Kane places this Purāṇa between 350 and 550 A.D. (*Hist. of Dharma Śāstra*, Vol. V, part 2, p. 906). Dikshitar (Introduction to *Purāṇā Index*, Vol. I, p. XX) thinks that this Purāṇa should be placed between 350 B. C. and 500 A. D.

36 Kane (*op. cit.*, Vol. V, part 2, pp. 907-9) places this work between 300 and 500 A.D. ; Pargiter (*A.I.H.T*, p. 80) assigns it to the 5th Century A.D ; Farquhar '*Outline*' etc. p. 143 gives the date 400 A.D. for this Purāṇa. Winternitz (*History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I, p. 545) places it in the 5th Century A. D. ; Hazra, (*op. cit.*, pp. 21-23) thinks that this work was composed not later than the 4th Century A D. ; Dikshitar thinks that it was composed before the 6th Century B. C. (*PIHC*, 10th session, pp. 46-50). See also *I.H.Q.* (Vol. VII, pp. 370 ff ; and Vol. VIII, pp. 747-67) ; also Introduction to *Purāṇa Index* (I, pp. XXV ff) ; see also Smith, *Early History of India*, pp. 22-3.

37 The *Brahmāṇḍa* is generally regarded as one of the earlier Purāṇas, but it was certainly composed after the *Vāyu* ; Dikshitar would assign it to the 4th Century B. C. (*Purāṇa Index*, I, p. XXII).

38 According to Dr. Hazra this portion of the *Matsya Purāṇa* was composed before 8th Century A.D. (*op. cit.*, pp. 26ff. ; and also p. 51). MM. Kane believes it to be the best preserved and among the earliest of the eighteen *Mahāpurāṇas*. He places it between 200 A.D. and 400 A.D. (see *op. cit.*, pp. 899-900). Dikshitar (*op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. XXIV) places it between the 4th Cent. B. C. and 3rd Century A.D.

39 Dr. Hazra, (*op. cit.*, p. 92) thinks that it was composed before

1050 A.D. MM. Kane (*op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 905) places it between 600-900 A.D.

40 Dr. Hazra (*op. cit.*, p. 104) suggests that it was composed by 800 A.D.

41 There is much controversy regarding the date of this highly interesting and important *Upapurāṇa* ; Bühler thinks that it was composed before 500 A.D. (*I.A.*, 1890, p. 408) ; Wintrnitz (*op. cit.*, I, p. 580) places it between 628 to 1000 A. D. ; Stella Kramrisch believes that this Purāṇa was composed between 500 A.D. and 9th Cent. A.D. (the date of Śaṅkarācārya) see *J.D.L.*, Vol. XI, p. 3. Miss P. Shah (see Introduction to her edition of the 3rd *khaṇḍa* of this *Upapurāṇa* pp. XXII—XXVI) places it in the late Gupta period (450-650 A.D.). Dr. Hazra, however, assigns it to 400 A.D.-500 A D. (*Studies in the Upa-Purāṇas*, Vol. I, p. 212) ; Kane rejects Dr Hazra's view and places this Purāṇa between 600 A.D. and 1000 A.D. (see *op. cit.*, V, p. 910).

42 Dr. Hazra thinks it to be a late Purāṇa and assigns this work to the later half of the 13th cent. A D. (*op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 461).

43 According to Dr. Hazra this particular *Mahāpurāṇa* was composed sometime in the 10th Cent. A. D. (*Studies in the Puranic Rites etc.* p. 151).

44 Dr. Hazra opines that the present *Skanda Purāṇa* was composed not earlier than 700 A D. (*op cit.*, pp. 157 ff) ; Kane (*op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 911-12) accepts Dr. Hazra's dating and places this Purāṇa between 7th and the 9th Century A.D.

45 *op. cit.*, p. 911.

46 6.60-98 ; see also Tawney, *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. II, pp. 100-3 ; for Richard Temple's comment on this story see *I.A.* (1929, pp. 133-4).

47 H. Jacobi writing in *E.R.E.* (Vol. II, p. 807) observes, "the strange myth about the birth of Kumāra is to be best interpreted on the assumption that in different parts of India there were several popular godlings of the War-god type, and these have been combined into the one Kumāra, the War-god common to all Indians..... ..... He was probably in the beginning conceived as a representation of a whole class of uncanny spirits somehow connected with fire and was afterwards promoted to the position of War-god".

48 Gopinath Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. II, part, II, p. 431.

49 1.124.13 ; also verses, 22-24. 50 *Ibid.*, 1.143.40.

51 See Dr. Hazra's *Studies in the Upa-Purāṇas*, Vol. 1, p. 39 and fn. ; also p. 32 (fn.).

52 "*Surasenāpatitvena sa yasmāddīpyate sadā* ।
tasmāt sa Kārttikeyastu nāmnā rājña iti smṛtaḥ ॥
Srugatauca smṛto dhāturyasya sa pratyayaḥ smṛtaḥ ।
gacchatīti rahastasmāt paryyāyāt Sroṣa ucyate" (quoted in N. N. Vasu's *Mayurbhanja Archaeological Survey*, Vol. 1, Introduction, p. XXI, (fn. 1).

53 Cf. *Indo-Iranica*, Vol. IV, No. 1, p. 27—(*Iranian Sraosa and Indian Skanda*).

54 See Haug, *Parsis*, p. 280 and *J.B.B.R.A.S.* (1922) pp. 5-25—*Sraosha of the Zoroastrian System* by V. V. Iyer who, however, prefers to identify him with Agni.

55 *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol II, part II, p. 432.

56 Skanda's connection with Sūrya in the historical times in proved by Lala Bhagat pillar near Kanpur (*A.R.A.S.I.*, 1929-30, p. 133 ; also the plate, XXXI c) which has been discussed elsewhere.

57 See *Skanda Purāṇa*, VI. 264. 381.

58 Cf. *Kūrma*, II.6.29—'*Yo'pi Brahmavidyām śreṣṭho Devasenāpatiḥ prabhuḥ* ; also *Śiva Purāṇa*, *Kailāśa Saṃhitā*, chs. 7ff. where Kārttikeya is repeatedly described as the supreme authority on Veda and Vedānta.

CHAPTER THREE

Kārttikeya Worship in Northern India

(A) History of Kārttikeya worship in Northern India from the earliest times to the beginning of the Gupta age—

Patañjali (2nd. cent. B. C., a contemporary of Puṣyamitra Śuṅga)[1] in his explanation of Pāṇini's Sūtra V.3.99 expressly mentions the images of Śiva, Skanda and Viśākha. The passage is highly important and interesting. It shows that the worship of the above-mentioned gods was prevalent at his time (*Sampratipūjārtha*). Patañjali further adds that the Mauryas devised the expedient of replenishing their royal coffer by the selling of images (*Mauryair hiraṇyārthibhirarcāḥ prakalptiāḥ*). This indirectly shows that the images were in great demand among the people.[2] From Patañjali's reference it can easily be inferred that the three Brahmanical gods Śiva, Skanda and Viśākha were specially popular among the masses in the Maurya period. If Jaina texts and traditions are to be believed, the founder of the Maurya dynasty had some strong leaning towards the Jaina faith. We are not in a position to ascertain the religion of his son Bindusāra, who too, probably was a follower of his father's religion. Aśoka the great, in spite of his respect for the Brāhmaṇas and the Ājīvikas, is known from his inscriptions and Ceylonese Chronicles as a follower of the religion of Śākyamuni. The people, however, had unshakable faith in the Brahmanical religion ; they were plain idolaters. The resourceful Maurya kings, could therefore, easily exploit their subjects' religious weakness by selling the images of the popular gods. Patañjali's passage further shows that in his time Skanda and Viśākha were regarded as separate gods. The latter is described (as we have already noticed) in the Epics and the Purāṇas as the brother (or son) of the former ; but there are passages in both the Epics and the Purāṇas where Viśākha is represented as another aspect of Skanda. According to the well-known *Vanaparvan* passage

Viśākha sprang from the right side of Skanda when it was struck by Śakra's thunderbolt.[3]

It is, therefore, a sure historical fact, that the worship of Skanda was practised in the Maurya period. We shall presently see, that he has worshipped as a god, probably even in the life-time of Buddha (6th. Cent. B.C.)

Another work of the same period (i.e. *circa* 2nd Cent. B C.), the Jaina *Āyāraṅga Sūtta*[4], informs us about the festivals of such gods as Indra, Rudra, Skanda and Mukunda (i.e. Viṣṇu,.[5] The testimony of this non-Brahmanical work of accepted antiquity is of great importance. The passage in question shows not only that the above mentioned gods were popular, but it indicates also that separate festivals were held in their honour. Here, once more, we get another proof of the peoples' faith in popular Hindu gods including Śiva and Skanda. It is also interesting to note that Viśākha is not here mentioned separately.

In Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*[6] reference is made in 2.4.17 to the temples (*Koṣṭhān*) of some of the Brahmanical gods. The whole passage runs thus—*Aparājitāpratihata Jayanta—Vaijayantakoṣṭhān Śiva-Vaiśravaṇā-ŚvinŚrīMadirā gṛhāṇi ca puramadhye kārayet*. Here is Prof. Kangle's translation of the passage. "He (i. e. the king should cause to be built in the centre of the city shrines for Aparājita, Apratihata, Jayanta and Vaijayanta as well as temples of Śiva, Vaiśvānara, Aśvins, Śrī and Madirā"[7]. In this connection Prof. Kangle remarks, "As all the four names Aparājita, Apratihata, Jayanta and Vaijayanta signify invincibility, they appear to be spirits of victory".[8] Mayer thinks that they are all forms of Kumāra or Skanda. The *Cāṇakyatikā* of Bhikṣu Prabhamatī (a fragmentary Sanskrit commentary) explains the terms as Viṣṇu, Indra, Indra's son and Skanda.[9] The *Bhāṣāvyākhyāna*, the Tamil-Malayalam commentary (of unknown date and author) and the *Śrīmūla*, the Sanskrit commentary written by T. Gaṇapati Śāstrī, understand by the terms, Durgā, Viṣṇu, Subrahmaṇya (i.e. Skanda) and Indra respectively. Prof. Kangle remarks, "The feminine form of the first name appears questionable". In his Hindi translation of Kauṭilya's

Arthaśāstra, Paṇḍeya Rāmateja Śāstrī[10] renders the four terms as Durgā, Nārāyaṇa, Indra's son and Indra. Kauṭilya (2.4 19) further remarks that the (city) gates (should be) presided over by Brahmā, Indra, Yama, and Senāpati—*BrahmaindraYama-Senāpatyānidvārāṇi*. There cannot be any doubt that Senāpati here refers to Skanda, who is the generalissimo of the celestials. Whatever may be the different interpretation of the various names, there cannot be any doubt that one of the gods mentioned by Kauṭilya is Skanda-Kārttikeya. Kauṭilya's testimony, therefore, proves the existence of temples of Kārttikeya along with other gods in pre-Christian times.

We have already discussed Patañjali's reference to the images of Śiva, Skanda and Viśakha. Another early Sanskrit work testifies to the worship of the images of Skanda in those days. We are referring here to the Sanskrit-Buddhist text the *Lalitavistara*, probably a work of the 1st Cent. B C,[11] We learn from the 8th Chapter of this work that the figures of Śakra, Śiva, Skanda, Nārāyaṇa, Kuvera, Candra, Sūrya, Vaiśravaṇa, Brahmā and the Lokapālas were shown to the infant Siddhārtha — *ŚivaSkandaNārāyaṇaKuberaCandraSūryaVāiśravaṇaŚakraBrahmaLokapālaprabhṛtayaḥ pratimā—sarvāḥ svebhyaḥ svebhyaḥ sthānebhyo vyuttāthāya Bodhisattvasya kramatalayonirpatanti sma*.[12] The antiquity of the passage is proved by the absence in this passage of the name of the post-epic,[13] elephant-faced god Gaṇapati. If the evidence of this work be accepted, then we have to take it for granted that the worship of Skanda was generally prevalent in the life-time of Buddha. It may, however, be argued that *Lalitavistara* was written at least 600 years after Buddha; still it will be equally risky to ignore the testimony of this work completely. Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* shows that Skanda was a popular god in the Maurya period ; and so there cannot be any improbability in his being worshipped during the lifetime of Buddha who lived only 200 years before the Mauryas.

Skanda-Kārttikeya, as is apparent from the above discussion, become a popular god long before the beginning of the Christian era. The testimony of the later Vedic literature too,

tells the same thing. His reputation was next only to Viṣṇu and Śiva.

The popularity of this deity vastly increased during the early Christian period. A number of images of this god belonging to the Kuṣāṇa period discovered from Mathurā (one of the greatest cities of Northern India of the early times) amply demonstrate his popularity (see *infra*, Ch. VIII). The Kuṣāṇas, who were a martial race, found in him their ideal god. So it is not surprising to find the portrait of the Indian War-god on the coins of one of their kings, Huviṣka.

We learn from the inscriptions that Huviṣka ruled at least from 106 to 138 A. D. (his earliest and last known dates being respectively the year 28 and 60) i. e. in the first half of the 2nd Century A.D. This remarkable king had a taste for a diversity of coin types. A number of Greek, Persian and Indian deities are represented on his coins. Indian deities include Śiva, Umā and Skanda-Kumāra with his different aspects. On the reverse of some of the gold coins of Huviṣka we find the representation of the god Mahāsena "standing, facing, clad in coat and chlamys, holding in right hand standard surmounted by bird."[14] As Dr. Sircar remarks, "the bird here is evidently a peacock".[15] The left hand rests upon a sword at his side ; monogram to left ; inscription to right in Greek character MAACHNO (=Maaseno=Mahāsena). Gardner had initially some doubts about the identity of Mahāsena which is an epithet of both Śiva and Skanda. Soon, of course, he was convinced that it was the figure of Skanda who appears also on other coins of Huviṣka.

On the reverse of some coins of Huviṣka we get the names 'SkandaKomaroBizago' with the figures of Skanda and Viśākha standing face to face, nimbate, each wearing chlamys and necklace and sword at waist ; but Skanda holds in the right hand standard surmounted by bird while Viśākha holds in the left hand spear.[16] Although we have here the names Skanda, Kumāra and Viśākha, we get only two figures, those of Skanda and Viśākha. In the Epics and the Purāṇas Viśākha is described both as the son and brother of Skanda. According to the *Vanaparvan* passage, quoted earlier, Viśākh

arose from the right side of Skanda's body. He is there described as a youth with a club in his hand and adorned with a celestial amulet. This description, makes him another aspect of Skanda, the War-god. We have already seen that Patañjali in his *Mahābhāṣya* mentions him as a different god (see also *infra*). Epigraphically, the name Viśākha is as old as the 3rd Century B.C.[17] On some other coins of Huviṣka we get the figures of three gods—those of Skanda, Mahāsena and Viśākha and the inscription, "SkandaKomaroMahaseno-Bizago" and here is Gardner's complete description: "Niche on basis, within which Skanda and Viśākha standing as above (i.e. plate XXVIII 22, 23); between them Mahāsena horned (?) facing, nimbate, clad in chlamys; sword at waist".[18] Dr. Banerjea in his *Development of Hindu Iconography* (p. 144) gives a more detailed description of the 'Niche' of Gardner—"it consists of an ornamental double platform with a linear representation of a superstructure."[19] Dr. Banerjea further observes in this connection, "if these coins prove anything, they prove that there were three gods or rather three aspects of the same god, *viz.* Skanda-Kumāra, Viśākha and Mahāsena". The testimony of the Epics and the early Puranic literature prove that Viśākha and Mahāsena were regarded as associates of Skanda-Kārttikeya. It is indeed difficult to find any iconographic difference between the figures on Huviṣka's coins.[20]

The manner in which Skanda and his associates are represented on Huviṣka's coins proves beyond all shadow of doubt that this illustrious successor of the great Kaniṣka had some special sentiment for the Indian War-god. Probably in the later part of his reign he came into open conflict with Nahapāna and his successors and at this critical time he invoked the aid of Skanda-Kārttikeya—the great Indian War-god. There is every reason to believe that Huviṣka had come to learn of the name and glory of Skanda-Kārttikeya from the Yaudheyas, who had Kārttikeya as their tutelary deity, and who probably were his feudatories at that time. The representation of a shrine on his coins proves the existence of the temples of Kārttikeya in Huviṣka's empire. In this

connection we venture to quote the following lines from the *Bhaviṣya Brāhmaparvan* a work probably of the 6th Century A.D.[21]—"no (deity) other than Kārttikeya is said to deserve worship by the king. The hero who, when going out for war, worships the son of Kṛttikās, conquers all, just as Indra defeats the *dānavas* in war"—

Kārttikeyād ṛte nānyo rājñāṃ pūjyaḥ pravakṣyate ॥
saṃgrāmaṃ gacchamāno yaḥ pūjayet Kṛttikāsutam ।
sa sarvaṃ jayate vīro yathendro dānavaṃ raṇe ॥

In an interesting note contributed to the Indian Historical Quarterly[22] Mr. H.K. Deb has tried to show that Mahāsena was another name of Huviṣka. According to him the name Mahāsena, which is found in a Kharoṣṭhī inscription from Peshawar (*C.I.I.*, Vol. II, plate XXV), refers actually to Huviṣka. He further thinks that the epithet *Sarasatava* found in a Mathurā inscription of Huviṣka (year 58)[23] actually means 'living or existing in reeds' which reminds one of *Śarajanman* or *Śarabhū* applied to Kārttikeya in the Epics and the Purāṇas, who according to mythology, was born among reeds.[24] Mr. Deb's theory cannot, however, be accepted in the absence of more convincing evidence. In this connection it may be pointed out, *en passant*, that the Greek War-god Ares also appears on some gold coins of this Kuṣāṇa king.

On the reverse of a circular copper coin of Devamitra, found in Ayodhyā, we find a symbol which Smith describes as 'cock on top of post'.[25] On the coins of Vijayamitra, another ruler of Ayodhyā, the same device is found.[26] Evidences of the Great Epic and the early Purāṇas prove Kārttikeya's connection with cock.[27] It is, therefore, permissible to think that both the above-mentioned kings were connected with Kārttikeya worship.[28]

Several years ago a red sandstone pillar was found at Dehrapur Tahsil of Kanpur district. Various scenes are found depicted on the pillar. It bears a very short inscription *Kumāravara*.[29] This obviously refers to the god Skanda-Kārttikeya, who was also known as Kumāra. The same

pillar bears a beautiful image of a peacock, the *vāhana* of Kārttikeya. The figure has been given much prominence in the pillar. Artistically, it is one of the triumphs of the early Indian sculpture. We also find a large figure of cock, carved in the round, which must have served as the crowning feature of the pillar or pilaster. This also proves the association of the pillar with the cult of Kārttikeya. There is no doubt that this is a remarkable pillar and directly shows Kārttikeya's popularity in that region at such an early date. The same pillar bears the figure of the Sun-god, seated in his chariot, which is drawn by four horses (for Skanda's association with the Sun-god, see *supra*).

Yaudheyas were the only ancient Indian tribe, who regarded Skanda-Kārttikeya as their guardian-deity. A very large number of coins (mostly copper and potin) of this tribe have been found from various places of Rajasthan, Punjab and U.P.[30] Six classes of their coins have been described by Allan. Kārttikeya appears in the polycephalous form (six-headed) on class 3 (Allan, pp. 270-75) coins of this tribe. So far only one silver coin of this tribe has been discovered (Allan, plate XXXIX.21). We have on the obverse here six-headed, standing Kārttikeya, holding spear in the right hand and the left hand resting on the hip; on the reverse the goddess Lakṣmī with an aureole round her head, (and not a six-headed goddess as Cunningham supposed) standing, facing, on lotus. The inscription on the obverse reads *Bhagavata-sv(ā)min(o) Brahmaṇya Y(au)dheya*. The legend on the copper coins is somewhat more elaborate; it reads, *Bhagavata Sv(ā)* or *Sāmino Brahmaṇyadevasya* (or *sa*) *Kumārasya* (or *sa*).[31] The legend on the silver coin has thus been translated by Allan, "of Brahmaṇya (a name of Kārttikeya), the divine lord of the Yaudheyas". The inscription on the copper coins is thus rendered, "of Kumāra, the divine lord Brahmaṇyadeva".[32] It has been very rightly pointed out that the genitive case-ending of the name of the divinity and the attributive epithet Svāmī clearly demonstrate that the coins were issued in the name of the deity.[33] On the obverse of the variety 'b' of the same class the War-god is represented with only one head and

head radiate.[34] On the variety 'c' of the same class six-headed Kārttikeya is shown on the reverse and prominence is given to the goddess who appears on the obverse.[35] Allan thinks that the coins with Kārttikeya, both on the obverse and the reverse, belong to the 2nd Century A.D. (see *op. cit.*, pp. CL. ff.). There are some other very interesting coins of this tribe which bear a different legend. They are grouped in class '6' by Allan (*cf.* pp. 276-8). On the obverse of this class we get the figure of the six-headed Kārttikeya 'standing, facing, holding spear in right hand, left hand on hip'; peacock is also represented on the left of the deity; the legend is immensely interesting; it reads, *Yaudheyagaṇasya jaya.* Allan assigns these coins to the 3rd-4th Century A.D. These fine coins reveal strong Kuṣāṇa influence. They resemble the seal of this tribe discovered from Ludhiana by Hoernle.[36] The seal bears the legend *Yaudheyānāṃ jayamantradhāraṇam* i.e. 'of the Yaudheya councillors of victory'. The class 6 coins and the seal probably indicate some military success on their part. Altekar and others think that the later Kūṣāṇas were humbled by this tribe.[37] The six-headed goddess Devasenā (Kārttikeya's wife according to the Great Epic) appears on the reverse of some Yaudheya coins.[38] Some other interesting coins discovered from Garhwal[39] have the legend *Rāvaṇasya* (of Rāvaṇa) on the obverse with six-headed Kārttikeya on the reverse.

We have given above some descriptions of the coins which are connected with the deity Kārttikeya. These coins clearly show that this tribe dedicated their kingdom to the War-god Skanda-Kārttikeya. The epithet *Brahmaṇya* found in their coins is not a new one. In the Great Epic and the Purāṇas Skanda receives this epithet more than once.[40] Early literary evidences too, prove that Skanda-Kārttikeya was the deity worshipped in the capital of the Yaudheyas. Probably these Yaudheyas were the same as the Mattamayūrakas of Rohītaka which is described in the *Mahābhārata* as a place specially favoured by the god Kārttikeya. This place is further described as a very prosperous country. They were defeated by Nakula, one of the brothers of Yudhiṣṭhira; the relevant

lines may be quoted in this connection—

Toto bahudhanaṃ ramyaṃ gavāḍhyaṃ dhanadhānyavat ।
Kārttikeyasya dayitaṃ Rohītakamupādravat ॥
tatra yuddhaṃ mahaccāsīcchūrairmattamayūrakaiḥ[41] ।

"And the hero first assailed the mountainous country Rohītaka that was dear unto (the celestial generalissimo) Kārttikeya and which was delightful and prosperous and full of kine and every kind of wealth and produce. And the encounter the son of Pāṇḍu had with the Mattamayūrakas of that place was fierce."[42] We have already said that a large number of Yaudheya coins were discovered from this place (i e. Rohītaka the modern Rohtak) by Sahni. So it is not improbable that Mattamayūraka was another name of the tribe. This very name also connects the tribe with peacock, the well-known *vāhana* of the War-god. The evidence of the Great Epic is corroborated by another literary work of an entirely different character. In the *Mahāmāyūrī*, a Buddhist-Sanskrit text of probably 1st-2nd Century A. D.[43], we get mention of Rohītaka as the place famous for Kārttikeya-Kumāra (*cf. Rohitake Kārttikeyaḥ Kumāro lokaviśrutaḥ*—Vs. 21). It is somewhat surprising to note that the place is not mentioned in any one of the printed Purāṇas. Regarding the term '*Bahudhānyaka*' it may be said that it is referred to in line 15 of the *Mahāmāyūrī*. On some Yaudheya coins discovered by Sahni near Rohtak we find the legend—*Yaudheyānāṃ bahudhānyake*.[44]

The very name 'Yaudheya' connects this tribe with war. Pāṇini, who is one of the earliest authorities to mention them,[45] connects the Yaudheyas with the Trigarttas and refer to them as forming an *Āyudhajīvisaṃgha* or tribal republican organisation depending on arms. Pāṇini's evidence makes it clear that the Yaudheyas were known as a separate tribe in his time i.e. *circa* 7th Century B.C. Inscriptions show that this valiant tribe suffered serious reverses twice after the Christian era—once in the hands of Rudradāmān (*cf.* Junagaḍh inscription) and the second time in the hands of Emperor Samudragupta (*cf.* Hariṣeṇa's *praśasti*) ; but these reverses

could not completely subdue this valiant tribe who continued their existence gloriously till at least upto the 6th Century A.D., for they are mentioned in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*. If Dr. Altekar's view be accepted, then they were responsible for the downfall of the Kuṣāṇa empire in India. In their wars against the foreigners they were certainly inspired by their tutelary deity Skanda-Kārttikeya, the War-god. This wonderful people maintained their existence for more than one thousand years (from the days of Pāṇini to the time of the composition of the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*) through countless vicissitudes, and afterwards disappeared in the ocean of Indian population. Their guardian-deity Skanda-Kārttikeya gave them joy in their victory and solace in their reverses.

According to Dr. J. N. Banerjea[46] Kārttikeya became the spiritual lord of the Yaudheyas probably some time after their debacle in the hands of the great Saka Satrap Rudradāman; but it is difficult to agree with that learned scholar on this point. We are not prepared to believe that the relevant passage of the Great Epic, quoted earlier, was written after 150 A.D., the date of Rudradāman's Junagaḍh Inscription (*E. I.*, VIII, No. 6). It is not possible to say from exactly what period this god became the spiritual lord of this great tribe ; but it can be reasonably suggested that Skanda-Kārttikeya was accepted as their guardian-deity possibly before the beginning of the Christian era. It is also interesting to note that both the one-headed and the six-headed forms of this god were known to this tribe. It may also be safely conjectured that there existed a number of temples dedicated to this god in the kingdom of the Yaudheyas. It is also of some interest to note that the Bijayagaḍh stone Inscription[47] (in the former Bharatpur State) speaks of a Yaudheya leader (*Yaudheya-gaṇapuraskṛta)* who is referred to in this epigraph as *Mahā-senāpati.*[48] This epithet instinctively reminds us of the name Mahāsena.

Few decades ago a rock Inscription[49] was discovered from Gunji (14 miles to the North-west of Śakti station on the old B.N. Rly). Bhandarkar and Mirashi assign it to the 1st Century A.D. Dr. D.C. Sircar, however, places it

in the 2nd Century A.D. The epigraph refers to one Kumāra-Vīradatta. Mirashi reads the name as Kumāra Varadatta Śrī or Śrī Kumāra Varadatta while Bhandarkar reads it as Kumāravasanta, which is clearly unwarranted. The name Kumāravītadatta literally means 'one dedicated to the god Kumāravīra'. Kumāravīra is no other than the god Skanda-Kārttikeya. The inscription, therefore, reveals the existence of another devotee of the god Kumāra who probably like Vāsudeva was conceived as a *vīra*.[50] In this connection Dr. Sircar makes the following observation, "that he was conceived as a *vīra*, par excellence, is clear not only from his career as depicted in the Epics and the Purāṇas but also from the fact that the *Mahābhārata* (3.232.8-10) enumerates Śūra and Suvīra both having the meaning of *vīra* in the list of the names of this deity".[51] Dr. Sircar further points out that the name Kumāravīradatta reminds one of the name Vīrapuruṣadatta borne by the Ikṣvāku kings of the Kṛṣṇā-Guntur region.

Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*, as we have already noticed, refers for the first time to the temples of the god Skanda-Kārttikeya. This particular work was definitely composed before the beginning of the Christian era. We have, however, no pre-Christian epigraphic reference to the temples of this god. Still, as the *Arthaśāstra* shows, temples dedicated to this god were in existence before the beginning of the Christian era.

The first epigraphic reference to a temple of Kārttikeya is found in an inscription of the third Century A. D. It was discovered at a place called Abbottabad in the Hazara district, now in West Pakistan.[52] The inscription is dated in the year 25 of one Mahārāja Kadambeśvaradāsa ; he was probably a semi-independent ruler as suggested by Dr. Sircar, who edited the epigraph. Dr. Sircar assigns the inscription to the third Century A.D. on palaeographical grounds. We learn from this inscription that a temple of the the god Kumāra (*Kumārasthāna*) was built by one Gaśura Shaphara son of Maka and a member of Gośura clan and apparently a foreigner. Dr. Sircar further observes that this particular name Shaphara reminds one of the well-known Pahlavi name Shahpuhre (Shapur) borne by three Sassanian emperors ruling respec

tively in 241-72, 310-70 and 383-88 A.D.[53] The inscription once more proves Kārttikeya's popularity with the foreigners. Huviṣka, the Kuṣāṇa emperor, was the first known foreigner who showed some sentiment for the Indian War-god by reproducing his various forms on his coins. We have, of course, some other instances of foreigners embracing Indian religion (cf. the Besnagar inscription of Heliodorus belonging to second-first Century B.C.). There is one particular reason why Skanda-Kārttikeya was specially venerated by the foreigners. Most of them came to this country as invaders. All of them belonged to the warlike tribes. The Indian War-god, therefore, soon attracted their reverential notice and became their favourite god.

Another third-Century inscription from former Central India (now M.P.) proves Skanda-Kārttikeya's popularity with the foreigners. The inscription was discovered near Sanchi and is dated. Prof. R. D. Banerji first edited the inscription.[54] He thought that the inscription belonged to the reign of Svāmī Jīvadāma, the Saka Satrap. Modern scholarship has rejected Prof. Banerji's reading of that name[55] As a matter of fact, there is no reference to Jīvadāma in that epigraph. It actually belongs to the time of Mahādaṇḍanāyaka Srīdharavarma Saka in the thirteenth year of his reign and is dated in the Śaka year 201 i.e. 279 A.D. Dr. Sircar thinks that Śrīdharavarma was probably an official of the Śaka house of Malwa but later assumed independence.[56] The inscription begins with a line praising the god Svāmī Mahāsena. It, therefore, directly shows that the god was held in high esteem by the above-mentioned Saka chief. It should also be remembered that the Sakas like the Kuṣāṇas and the Pahlavas came to India as invaders.

Several years ago an image of Kārttikeya was discovered from a well not far from the famous ancient site of the Kankali tila at Mathurā.[57] Fortunately for us the image is inscribed ; the translation of the three-line inscription is given below :—

"In the 11th year, 4th month of winter, on the first day, on this date was installed an image of Kārttikeya (*Kārttikeya-*

sya pratimā) by the brothers Viśvadeva, Viśvasena, Viśvabhava and Viśvavasu, the sons of Viśvavila (who were) Kṣatriyas in their own house".[58]

The date of the inscription, according to M.M. Nagar, is referable to the Saka era, and, therefore, corresponds to A.D. 89, thus falling in the reign of the Kuṣāṇa Emperor Kaniṣka. The inscription once more proves that the images of this god were very much in vogue in the early centuries of the Christian era. It further shows that those Kṣatriya brothers, who obviously did not belong to any royal family, were sincere devotees of the War-god.[59]

The above mentioned inscriptions discovered from three different parts of Northern India go far to prove the solid popularity enjoyed by this god both among the foreigners as well as the local people. We have already seen that he was regarded as a tutelary deity by such an influential and powerful tribe as the Yaudheyas. A number of early images of this god discovered from Northern India also testify to his popularity (see, Ch. VIII).

Section B—Skanda-Kārttikeya in the Gupta Age

We now reach the Gupta age. We have seen above that this deity had already become a considerably important member of the Hindu pantheon in Northern India. His popularity reached its zenith during the period of the Imperial Guptas.

The Guptas, as is well-known, were *Parama-Bhāgavatas*. The emperors from Candra Gupta II onwards actually assumed the title '*Parama-Bhāgavata*'. Samudra Gupta had positive leanings towards Vaiṣṇavism. This is proved by the *Garuḍadhvaja* of his coins. It should, however, be remembered that as the Gupta kings were devout Hindus, other gods, therefore, did not escape their reverential attention. Skanda-Kārttikeya was one of those 'other gods' who commanded great respect both among the rulers and the ruled in that period.

The first Gupta emperor who showed some concrete respect for this god was Kumāra Gupta I. He was the first

Gupta king to issue the 'Peacock type' (as Allan calls them)[60] or the 'Kārttikeya type' (as Dr. Altekar terms them)[61] of gold coins. There cannot be any doubt that this new series, where Kārttikeya is represented on the reverse, was issued in honour of that particular god.[62] Smith wrongly supposed that the figure on the reverse represented a female deity[63] ; but Allan correctly identifies the figure on the reverse with the War-god Skanda-Kārttikeya. Allan has also noticed two varieties of this class of coins.[64] Here is his description of the variety 'a'—Obverse :—King Nimbate, standing left ; wearing waist cloth, with long sashes and jewellery, feeding peacock from a bunch of fruit,[65] held in the right hand, and left hand behind him ; legend uncertain and incomplete ; it begins *Jayati svabhūmau guṇarāśi* (Allan himself corrected this reading later[66] with the help of a better-preserved coin). The actual reading is *Jayati svaguṇairguṇa* followed by five more characters on right[67] and ends with *Mahendrakumāraḥ* on left. Reverse :—Kārttikeya nimbate, three quarters to left, riding on his peacock Paravāṇī, holding spear in left hand over shoulder with right hand sprinkling incense on altar on right (?) ; the peacock stands on a kind of platform ; border of dots *Mahendrakumāraḥ*.[68] Another variety is described in page 86 of Allan ; there is not much difference between the two varieties. The king is slightly stooping and his right hand is empty ; the left hand rests on hips, peacock facing in front.[69]

It has been universally admitted that this new series was intended to be a numismatic homage to the deity Skanda-Kārttikeya. The coins have, however, been found in limited numbers (British Museum, 9; Indian Museum, 5; Lucknow 2; Bayana hoard contains only 13 coins of this type).[70] Dr. Altekar thinks that the relative paucity of these coins indicate that they were issued in the later part of Kumāra Gupta I's reign.[71]. It is more than an accident that the king was named after the War-god. Peacock, Kārttikeya's *vāhana*, seems to have been a favourite bird of this king. It appears on the 'Horseman'[72] and also 'Tiger-slayer[73] classes of his coins. These coins are also indirectly connected with the Kārttikeya

cult through his *vāhana*, the peacock. This bird with outspread wings and tail appears on the reverse of his silver coins (meant for the circulation in Central provinces).[74] They exhibit two varieties.[75] This type was also continued by Kumāra Gupta I's son and successor Skanda Gupta.[76] The legend on Kumāra Gupta I's coins runs, *Vijitāvaniravanipati(ḥ) Kumāragupto divaṃ jayati*. On Skanda Gupta's coins we have, '*Vijitāvaniravanipatir jayati divaṃ Skanda gupto' yaṃ*'.

The above-mentioned coins or coin-types attest to the unique popularity this god enjoyed during the reign of both Kumāra Gupta I and his son Skanda Gupta. During the reign of Kumāra Gupta I one Dhruvaśarman who was respected by the state council (*parṣadā mānitena*) caused a costly and beautiful *pratolī* (a gate-way with a flight of steps)[77] to be built and a pillar to be erected along with a Dharmasatra in the temple (*Āyatana*) of the god Svāmī Mahāsena at Bilsad (Eta district, U. P.) in the Gupta year 96 (=415-16 A D.).[78] The inscription indirectly proves that the temple was in existence before this date i.e. 415-416 A.D. We do not know when and by whom this temple was built. Probably it was constructed during the reign of Kumāra Gupta I's grandfather or great-grandfather i.e in the early part of the fourth Century A.D. Dhruvaśarman of this epigraph waṣ certainly an ardent devotee of the god. The expression *bhagavatas=trailokya-tejas-saṃbhāv-ādbhuta-mūrtter-Brahmaṇyadevasya* leaves no room to doubt that Dhruvaśarman looked upon Kārttikeya as a supreme god. The term *Brahmaṇyadeva* found in this inscription reminds us of the similar epithet given to the War-god on the Yaudheya coins. As a matter of fact, this is an exclusive epithet of this god. In the Great Epic Skanda gets this epithet more than once. At present there is no trace of the temple mentioned in the Bilsad inscription.

We have already remarked that most of the Gupta emperors were devout Bhāgavatas. Yet our above discussion proves that at least two of them viz. Kumāra Gupta I and Skanda Gupta had equal respect for the War-god Skanda-Kārttikeya. Dr. R. S. Tripathi[79] goes a little further and

declares that Kumāra Gupta I's "object of adoration was Kārttikeya rather than Viṣṇu". We must not overlook the fact that this king had introduced for the first time the 'Peacock-type' of gold coins. In this connection the following remark of Dr. J. N. Banerjea may not be irrelevant : ' Kumāra Gupta I was certainly in urgent need of the graces of the War-god Kārttikeya, for in the last period of his rule he was troubled by the ruthless invasions of the Hūṇas and of the Puṣyamitras, and his special predilection for this martial god is also manifest in the name of one of his sons *viz*. Skanda, if not of himself".[80]

Some scholars believe that *Kumārasambhavam* of Kālidasa[81] was written at the orders of Candra Gupta II to commemorate the birth of his son Kumāra Gupta I. Most of the Western scholars are inclined to accept this theory. The fact that the great poet wrote such a fascinating poem on the birth of Kumāra (i.e. Skanda) proves the immense popularity the War-god enjoyed during his life-time.[82] There is much force, we believe, in the following observation of Dr. V. S. Agrawala,[83] "in fact Skanda stood as the nation's ideal god during the Gupta period".

The existence of another Gupta temple dedicated to this god is disclosed by a copper-plate inscription[84] of the Ucchakalpa king Sarvanātha found at Sohawal in the Baghelkhand tract of the former Central Indian Agency (the inscription is now preserved in Rajputana Museum, Ajmer). The inscription is dated in the year 191. A number of scholars like Kielhorn[85] and D. R. Bhandarkar[86] refer the inscriptions of the Ucchakalpa kings to the Kalacuri era of 248-9 A.D. If this view is accepted, then the date of this inscription will correspond to 437 A.D.—a date not far removed from the Bilsad Pillar inscription of Kumāra Gupta I ; but other scholars like Fleet,[87] Ojha,[88] Halder,[89] Mirashi[90] and D. C. Sircar[91] are of the opinion that the dates found in the inscriptions of the Ucchakalpa kings are referable to the Gupta era. Dr. Sircar observes, "the Bhumra inscription (Bhandarkar, list No. 1661) the date of which is possibly A.D. 508 rather than A.D. 484 or 520 shows that Hastin of the Parivrājaka

family with dates between 156 and 191 and Sarvanātha of Ucchakalpa with dates between 191 and 214 were contemporaries. The dates should be referred to the Gupta era as the region in question either formed part of or at least, bordered on the Gupta empire. There is no evidence of the Kalacuri era being used in that early time".[92] Halder thinks that they were tributaries of the Vâkāṭakas.[93] We accept here the second view and take the inscription as dated in the year 191 of the Gupta era corresponding to 510-11 A.D.

The object of the inscription is to record that Mahārāja Sarvanātha granted the village of Vaiśyavaṭaka, for the maintenance of the temple of Kārttikeya (*Bhagavatasvāmī Kārttikeyasvāmī*) built by him, to two individuals named Viśākhadatta and Sakti ; it, therefore, shows that the Ucchakalpa king Sarvanātha, who was probably a Gupta feudatory, was a zealous devotee of the god Skanda-Kārttikeya. There is, however, no trace of any such temple at present in that region.

The discovery of a number of Gupta images of Skanda-Kārttikeya from various parts of Northern India proves his popularity with the general people in that period. His images have been found from Mathurā, Bhumra, Pawaya, Nagar, Bairat, Samalji, (Gujrat), Banaras, Kanauj, Ḍhuḍhua (Orissa) and other places (see *infra*, Ch. VIII).

A well-executed terracotta seal with characters of the third-fourth Century A.D. was found several years before by Marshall in course of excavations at Bhīṭā (near Allahabad).[94] It is a seal of a ruling chief. The legend around the seal reads, *Śrī Vindhyavedhamahārājasya Maheśvara-Mahāsenātisṛṣṭarājyasya Vṛṣadhvajasya Gautamīputrasya*. Marshall gives the following translation of the inscription—"Of the illustrious Mahārāja Gautamīputra Vṛṣadhvaja, the penetrator of the Vindhyas, who had made over his kingdom to the great lord Kārttikeya". The letters are very small but neatly cut and finely preserved. In respect of execution, as Marshall observes, the seal excels any object of this class which has yet been discovered in India. The characters according to Marshall, resemble those of Jaggayyapeta inscrip-

tions[95] and belong like them to the third-fourth Century A. D. Marshall further observes, "it seems to indicate that in ancient time there may have existed a pious custom, according to which rulers on the occasion of their accession entrusted their kingdom to their *iṣṭadevatās* and considered themselves as mere agents". Marshall cites an instance from the history of Travancore where one Mahārāja Mārtaṇḍavarman actually performed a similar ceremony in the middle of the tenth Century A.D.[96] The expression *Maheśvara Mahāsenātisṛṣṭarājya* reminds us of *Maheśvara-Mahāsenātisṛṣṭarājyavibhavaḥ* found in the Rithapur plates of Nala Bhavattavarman[97] and Kesaribeda plates of Nala Arthapati-Bhaṭṭāṭaka.[98] Dr. Sircar thinks that *Vindhyavedhana* of the Bhīṭā seal was probably a Southerner.[99] We cannot say, whether there eaisted any relation between the Nalas and the king referred to in the Bhīṭā seal. In any case, the fact that stands out prominent is that the king mentioned in the Bhīṭā seal was an ardent devotee of the Lord Kārttikeya,

Some other seals of the Gupta age testify to the popularity of the cult of Skanda-Kārttikeya. An oval seal bearing a peacock standing to left with uplifted tail and a legend was found by Marshall at Bhīṭā[100] Another seal of Vyāghrabala depicting a peacock (fan-tailed) was found at Basrah by Spooner.[101] A fine silver matrix was discovered at Rajghat (Banaras). It shows a fan-tailed peacock with the inscription 'Śūra Gupta' in Gupta script. Another seal of the Gupta period from the same place, "shows two soldiers standing, holding spear in their right hands and the left hands akimbo ; the legend on the right reads—*Mahā Si* (a mistake for *Su*) *rasya*. This seal device reminds us of the figures of Skanda-Komaro and Bizago on Huviṣka's coins and the standing Dioscuri on the coins of such Indo-Greek kings as Diomedes, Archebius and others".[102] There cannot be any doubt that the representation of the peacock on the above-mentioned seals connect them with Kārttikeya worship.

Skanda-Kārttikeya's popularity was not affected during the reign of Kumāra Gupta I's son and successor Skanda Gupta. The name of the Emperor himself testifies to his connection

with that god. That he was as valiant as Skanda is proved by ihe Bhitarl pillar inscription. Like the god of War he vanquished his adversaries (*bhuja-bala-vijit-āri)*. His 'Peacock type' of coins meant for circulation in Central India also indirectly shows his patronage of the cult of Skanda-Kārttikeya. Skanda and the divine mothers are mentioned in line nine of the much-mutilated Bihar stone inscription of this king.[103]

Another Imperial Gupta king was named after the War-god. We are referring to Kumāra Gupta II whose Bhitari seal was discovered in 1889.[104] This king was the grandson of Pūru Gupta, who was a son of the Emperor Kūmara Gupta I by queen Anantadevī. This king is also apparently mentioned in the Sarnath Buddhist image inscription of the Gupta era 154 i.e. 473-4 A.D.[105]

Emperor Budha Gupta, a son of Pūru Gupta,[106] also continued the 'Peacock type' of coins, first issued by Kumāra Gupta I. This proves that this king also retained the same respect for the War-god.

The Later Guptas who ruled in the 6th and 7th Centuries of the Christian era had definite leaning towards this god. Two of the Later Gupta Kings were named after the War-god. The name of the son and successor of the king Jīvita Gupta I is Kumāra Gupta (called Kumāra Gupta III by Dr. Raychaudhuri).[107] This shows that 'Kumāra' was an extremely popular name both among the early Imperial Guptas and the Later Guptas. In lines 5-6 of the undated Aphsad inscription of Ādityasena,[108] Kumāra Gupta, the son of Jīvita Gupta I is compared with "the son (*tanaya*) of Hara who rides upon a peacock (*Śikhivāhana*)" who is obviously Kārttikeya. That he was a formidable ruler is proved by the fact that he "churned that formidable milk-ocean, the cause of the attainment of fortune, which was the army of the glorious Īśānavarman" (Aphsad inscription), the great Maukhari king mentioned in the Haraha inssription of A,D. 554.[109] The grandson of this Kumāra Gupta too, was named after the War-god. He was the great Mahāsena Gupta, whose fame spread as far as Lauhitya (Aphsad inscription). This king probably had a

sister Mahāsena Guptā Devī who is represented in the Madhuvan grant and Sonpat copper seal inscription of Harṣa as the mother of Prabhākaravardhana and grandmother of Rājya, Harṣa and Rājyaśrī. This shows that the Gupta kings were not merely satisfied with christening their sons after the War-god, but their daughters, too, were named after this deity. One of Mahāsena Gupta's sons was probably Kumāra Gupta mentioned in Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita* as a friend and associate of Rājyavardhana.

Skanda's popularity in Northern India seems to have declined after the Gupta age. In the post-Gupta inscriptions he is increasingly associated with Śiva. It is interesting to note that in the pre-Gupta or Gupta inscriptions, Kārttikeya is not in any way connected with Śiva or his spouse Gaurī. Everywhere in those inscriptions he is mentioned alone. The earliest inscription to connect him with any other god is that found from Nāgārjunikoṇḍa where he is called *Hutavaha-tanaya* i.e. Agni's son.[110]

From seventh Century onwards the War-god became a regular member of Siva's family consisting of Śiva, Gaurī, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya. In the inscriptions of the seventh Century and of the later period Kārttikeya is expressly called Siva's son (*cf.* Aphsad inscription of Ādityasena[111] and Mallar plates of Mahāśiva Gupta[112], both of which belong to the seventh Century A.D.). In some places of Northern India, however. he was specially worshipped as in Northern Bengal and Baijnath in Almora District of U.P. In mediaeval times, there existed a famous town named after the War-god near modern Garur (in Almora) called Kārttikeyapura or Kārttikeya-nagara. A number of inscriptions belonging to the ninth and the tenth Centuries A.D. found from different places of Almora district refer to this town. We have inscriptions of Paramabhaṭṭāraka Mahārājādhirāja Parameśvara Lalitaśūradeva (dated in the year 21 and 22), son of P.M.P. Iṣṭagana and grandson of Nimbara all which were issued from Kārttikeyapura [113] Both Kielhorn and Dr. Sircar have opined that Lalitaśūradeva reigned in the second half of the ninth Century A.D. This Kārttikeyapura was apparently

the capital of Lalitaśūradeva which was situated, according to his inscriptions, in the Kārttikeya-viṣaya[114]. The same place is also mentioned in an inscription of P.M.P. Padmaṭadeva (year 25) and in two Taleśvara copper plate grants of Dyutivarman (year 5) and Viṣṇuvarman (year 28)[115]. According to a tradition, first recorded by Atkinson,[116] the city was built by a Katyuri king of Katyur valley in Kumaon on the ruins of an older city named Karavīrapura.[117] Drs. Bhandarkar and Sircar think that Kartṛpura referred to in the Allahabad *Praśasti* of Samudra Gupta may be another form of the name Kārttikeyapura.[118] Dr. Sircar further suggests (*E. I.*, XXXI, p. 279) that the name Kārttikeyapura may be the Sanskritized form of the aboriginal name Katyur.

The only known literary reference to this city is found in the ninth chapter of Rājaśekhara's *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*[119]. The name is given there as Kārttikeyanagara. The relevant passage is here quoted—

dattvā ruddhagatiḥ Khasādhipataye devīṃ Dhruvasvāminīṃ
yasmātkhaṇḍitasāhaso nivavṛte Śrī-Śarmagupto nṛpaḥ I
tasminneva Himālaye guruguhākoṇakvanatkinnare
gīyante tava Kārttikeyanagarastrīṇāṃ gaṇaiḥ kīrtayaḥ II

As the author was a contemporary of the Pratihāra king Mahendrapāla, the work was composed sometime in the tenth century A. D. Rājaśekhara's reference proves that the place was very much well-known in the mediaeval times

Northern Bengal was another well-known seat of Kārttikeya worship in the mediaeval times. We learn from the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* that Jayapīḍa, a grand-son of Lalitāditya Muktāpīḍa, came to Bengal in the middle of the eighth century A.D. One Jayanta, according to Kalhaṇa, was the king of Gauḍa at that time (the name of this king, is, however, not found in inscriptions). From verse 422 of the fourth *taraṅga* of this work we learn that prince Jayapīḍa had rested for a while, on a slab at the door of a temple of Kārttikeya, in the vicinity of the city of Puṇḍravardhana. We do not know when this temple was built. Kalhaṇa's testimony proves

that the temple was in existence in the eighth century A.D. It is reasonable, therefore, to infer that this temple was built sometime in the seventh century A. D., and not improbably during the reign of Mahārājādhirāja Śaśāṅka, who was a devoted Śaiva. That Puṇḍravardhana was a well-known centre of Kārttikeya-worship is proved by other sources, some of which are much earlier than Kalhaṇa's time. In chapter 81 of the *Pūrva Khaṇḍa* of the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* occurs a verse (No. 15) which runs as follows—

Kāmarūpaṃ mahātīrthaṃ Kāmākhyā yatra tiṣṭhati ॥
Puṇḍravardhanakaṃ tīrthaṃ Kārttikeyaśca yatra ca[120] ।

The above quoted verse is of unique importance as no other *Mahā* or Upa-Purāṇa contains any reference to the Kārttikeya-tīrtha of Puṇḍravardhana. According to MM. Kane this work was composed sometime between the sixth and the tenth Century A.D.[121] Dr. Hazra places it in the tenth century A.D.[122] So both these scholars place this Purāṇa much before the time of the composition of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*. The same temple is also referred to in the *Karatoyā-māhātmya*[123], a work of uncertain date.

A mound, which P. C. Sen calls Skander Dhap, situated in Mauza Bagpara two miles from Mahāsthān, is taken to represent the site of the temple of Skanda mentioned by Kalhaṇa, and the poet of the *Garuḍa Purāṇa*. It has further been suggested that the same place was known to Sandhyākara Nandin by the name Skandanagara.[124] This mound is thus described in *J. A. S. B.* (1878), p. 91, "60′ square on top, slopes somewhat abruptly on the east, where it is 30′ above the level of the field but descends gradually in terraces on the other sides" where it is called Skander ghat. In this connection K. N. Diksit observes[125]—"in view of the mention of Skanda as one of the limits of Mahāsthān in the local *Karatoyāmāhātmya* and the reference to a Skanda-temple in the vicinity of Puṇḍravardhana, it would be particularly interesting to see whether the mound really contains any relics of a temple dedicated to the god Skanda-Kārttikeya". We cannot be sure about the identification of Skandanagara

mentioned in the *Rāmacarita* ;[126] but this reference proves the existence of a town, named after this god, in North Bengal. That North Bengal was a seat of Kārttikeya worship is also proved by a highly interesting epigraph[127] discovered at Kolagallu in the Kanarese district (modern Mysore) belonging to the reign of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Khoṭṭiga dated in Śaka 889 i.e. 967 A.D. This inscription records the installation of the images of Kārttikeya and other gods at the village of Kolagala by the *Brahmacārin* Gadādhara. This gentleman is described as a *lohāsenī* belonging to the *Śāṇḍilya gotra* and as the crest-jewel of the Gauḍa country (verse 13). The next verse tells us that he was born in the village Taḍā and that he was the illuminator of the Varendrī country. The same Gadādhara had set up another image of Skanda in the village of Kudatini.[128] We learn from this inscription that the region around Kolagallu was known as '*Kārttikeya-tapovana*'. Verse 19 of the Kolagallu inscription of Khoṭṭiga informs us that Gadādhara was conducting the administration of the realm of the god Kārttikeya. The epigraph also contains a fine eulogy of Kārttikeya (verses 2-12). The above-mentioned epigraphs leave no room to doubt that this Brāhmaṇa Gadādhara was a sincere follower of the god Kārttikeya ; but what is of far greater importance is that he is described as a resident of the Varendrī country i. e. North Bengal. The editor N. L. Rao observes in this connection, "we do not know when this celebrity came from Varendrī to the Kanarese country, but this much is clear that he rose to this eminence on account of his learning and other qualities. It is possible that Kṛṣṇa III had met and brought him to the South during his second Northern expedition". The village Taḍā, mentioned in the inscription, has tentatively been identified with Tārā lying at a distance of about 12 miles south-east of Dinajpur.

The importance of this inscription can never be over-emphasised. It demonstrates the zeal of a Bengali Brahmin to popularise his god in a distant country. It is probable that Gadādhara was himself either one of the high priests of the Kārttikeya temple of Puṇḍravardhana or connected with one of them. He went and settled in the Kanarese country

probably at the request of one of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kings. Immediately after his arrival in this country he seems to have devoted himself entirely to the arduous task of popularising his favourite deity in that part of the Kanarese country. To what extent he was successful, the above-mentioned epigraph will testify.

It is also interesting to note that most of the Kārttikeya images found in Bengal hail from Varendrī or North Bengal (see also *infra*, ch. VIII).

Judging from the discovery of numerous mediaeval images of Kārttikeya from various places of Northern India, it becomes clear that he enjoyed some sort of popularity, although it was clearly on the decline. As we have elsewhere pointed out, he was always associated with Śiva and Umā in the later inscriptions and as Sir R. G. Bhandarkar has observed, separate shrines were seldom dedicated to him in the later mediaeval age in Northern India.[129]

We learn from the *Caṇḍakauśika* of Ārya Kṣemiśvara (Act 5, last verse) that Kārttikeya was another name of the Gurjara Pratihāra king Mahīpāla I.[130] A temple of Kumāreśvara i.e. Kārttikeya has been referred to in the Bijholi Rock inscription of Cahamāna Someśvara dated in the *Vikrama Samvat* 1226 i. e. 1168 A. D.[131] Bijholi is 112 miles north-east of Udaipur. According to the inscription the temple was situated at Bhīmavana which has been identified by the editor Vyas with Pathar (Rajasthan). Another such temple of Kumāreśvara is mentioned in the Miraj plates of Jayasiṃha II (11th Cent. A.D.).[132] From Gurgi (2 miles east of Rewa) inscription[133] of Prabodhaśiva (of *Mattamayūraka* sect) we learn that his Guru Praśāntaśiva dedicated images of Umā, Śiva, Durgā, Ṣaḍānana i.e. Kārttikeya, Gaṇapati and Sarasvatī in the temples close to the palace. Paldi inscription[134] of Guhila Arisiṃha dated in the *Vikrama Samvat* 1173 i.e. 1116 A.D. is found engraved on the wall of the temple of 'Kārttikasvāmin' near a bigger Śiva temple. Paldi is only 5 miles to the north of Udaipur.

A magnificent temple of Kumāra was built by Lavaṇaprasāda, king of Gujrat in 1253 A.D.[135]

Savidhe Vardhamāna (sya) spardhamānaṃ payodhinā I
Adhaḥkṛtasudhāsāraṃ yaḥ Kumāramakārayat II

"Who (Lavaṇapraśāda) caused to be erected in the neighbourhood of Vardhamāna a (temple of) Kumāra rivalling the ocean (in the possession of treasures) and surpassing the moon (in brilliancy)". This place has been identified by Bühler with modern Vaḍhvan in Gujrat.

NOTES

1 For some recent discussion on the date of Patañjali, see *I.C.*, Vol. III, pp. 1 ff. ; see also *I.A*, 1918, p. 51.

2 See J. N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, p. 86 ; see also Sten Konow in *I. A.* (1909) pp. 148-9 ; also R. G. Bhandarkar, *Collected Works*, Vol. IV, p. 215 ; Weber in *Indische Studien*, Vol. V, pp. 147 ff. first discussed this matter.

3 *Mbh.*, III.227.16-7.

4 For the date of its composition see Jacobi's introduction in *S.B E.*, Vol. XXII, pp. XXXIX ff.

5 Book 2, lecture 1, lesson 2.

6 For the date of the composition of this highly interesting Sanskrit work on polity, see *I.A.*. 1918, pp. 157-61 & 187-95, where Jacobi strongly maintains the view that the work was composed in the 4th cent. B.C. i.e. during the life-time of Candragupta Maurya ; but according to quite a few Indian and Western scholars the work was composed not before the 2nd cent. B. C. References in this work to such words as *Cīnabhūmi* and *Cīnapaṭṭa*, according to such scholars, preclude the possibility of a date earlier than the middle of the 3rd cent. B. C. (see *P.H.A.I.*, p. 10 fn ; see also *ibid.*, pp. 277-8—"the absence of the name *'dīnāra'* in the sections dealing with weights (Book II, chapters, 12 and 19) proves that it is a pre-Gupta work. See also Johnston *J.R.A S.*, 1929, pp. 77ff. Keith places this work in 300 A.D. (*H.S.L.*, p. 461); but it is difficult to accept Keith's view. For some other articles dealing with the *Arthaśāstra*, see *C.H.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 679-80.

7 Kangle, part II, p. 80.

8 *Loc. cit.*

9 *Loc cit.* ; according to the *Mbh*,, XIII.149.81 Aparājita is one of the thousand names of Viṣṇu ; Aparājita appears as one of the eleven Rudras in another place of that work (XIII.150.12).

10 P. 84.

11 For the date of this work see R. L. Mitra's Introduction (pp. 19 ff.) in his translation of the *Lalitavistara* ; see also P. L. Vaidya's Introuction, pp. XI-XII to his recent edition of this work. It was translated several times in Chinese in the 1st, 3rd and the 4th Cent. A D. Most of the scholars and historians of Sanskrit literature think that this is a 1st cent. B.C work.

12 P. 137 of Mitra's edition ; p. 120 of Lefmann's and p. 84 of P. L. Vaidya's edition.

13 Only in some late passages of the *Mahābhārata* Gaṇapati is mentioned by name ; in such passages he is described as an amanuensis.

14 See P. Gardner, *Catalogue of the Coins in the British Museum*, plate XXVII.16 and page 138 ; see also introduction, pp. LXIV-LXV ; see

also Cunningham, *Coins of the Indo-Scythians*, part III, pp. 53-54, plate XX 15.

15 *Select Inscriptions*, Vol. I, p. 155, fn. 4 ; cf. *Bṛhat Saṃhitā*, 57-41, *Skandaḥ Kumārarūpaḥ śaktidharaḥ barhiketuśca.*

16 Gardner, *op. cit.*, plate XXVIII, 22, 23, ; see also *ibid.*, p. 149 and introduction, p. LXV ; Cunningham, *op. cit.*, plate, XX.16.

17 See *J.I.S.O.A.*, III, p. 125.

18 See *op. cit.*, 150 and plate XXVIII. 24 ; also Introduction, p. LXVI ; see also plate XX.17 of Cunningham who, however, substitutes the word 'temple' for 'Niche' ; he also adds the following remark, "all these three names belong to Kārttikeya, the Indian god of War" (*op, cit.*, p. 53).

19 Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar is not correct when he says that on certain coins of Huviṣka there are four figures corresponding to four different gods, *viz.*, Skanda, Kumāra, Viśākha and Mahāsena (*Carmichael Lectures*, 1921, pp. 22-3).

20 *Cf.* Dr. Banerjea's observation "their iconography shows that they were to all interests and purposes the same god".

21 *Bhaviṣya*, I.46.8-9 ; the verses are also found in the *Bhaviṣyottara Purāṇa* (42.24-5) a work probably of the 8th cent. A.D., which forms the 4th part of the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* in the Venkaṭeśvara edition, see Hazra, *Studies in the Upa-Purāṇas*, Vol. II, p. 395. Dr. Hazra has quoted the above verses in p. 378 (fn.) of the same work.

22 Vol. XII pp. 153-6, "Huviṣka as Mahāsena".

23 *E.I.*, I.9.

24 From the Buddhist and Sanskrit literature we learn that the famous Caṇḍa Pradyota (Pajjota of Pali), a contemporary of Bimbisāra and Buddha, bore the surname Mahāsena. In *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa* (Act 2) a play ascribed to Bhāsa, the king Caṇḍa Pradyota claims that he is a true Mahāsena, when he is given the news of Udayana's capture—*Adyāsmi Mahāsenaḥ*. (See *Plays Ascribed to Bhāsa* edited by C.R. Devadhar p. 78).

25 Smith, *Catalogue of Coins etc.*, Vol. I, p. 151, Nos. 29, 31, 32.

26 See Allan, *Coins of Ancient India*, plate XVII, figure 22.

27 Cf., *Mbh.*, III.226.14—*Kukkuṭasya tu sādhanam* ; also *Vāyu*, 72.45.

28 See Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

29 M. S. Vats thinks that the inscription should be assigned to the first cent. B. C. (See *A.S.I.A.R.*, 1929-30, plate XXXI C also p. 133). Sahni, however, believes that the inscription and the pillar belong to the 3rd cent. A.D. (see *ibid.*, p. 133, fn. 2). Rai Saheb Babu Prayag Dayal (*J.U.P.H.S.*, Vol. IV, part II, July, 1930, pp. 38-41) observes that "the pillar on artistic and palaeographic grounds can safely be assigned to about the 1st cent B.C." The discovery of a copper coin of the Śaka Satrap Śoḍāsa (1st cent. B.C.) from the same place

seems to support the contention of Vats and Dayal. The latter, however, reads the inscription as *Kumāravīra* and supposes it to be the name of a person ; but the reading *Kumāravara* is generally accepted.

30 See Allan, *Calalogue of Coins in Ancient India*, pp. 265-78 ; see also his introduction, pp. CL II-CL III ; after the publication of Allan's work several other coins of this tribe have been discovered from Rohtak, Dehradun and Garhwal region (see *J.U.P.H.S*, Vol. XII, pp. 82 5 ; also *Proc. N.S.I.*, 1936 and Mem. *N.S.I.*, No 3 ; also *J.N.S.I.*, Vol. II, pp. 109-12 ; and *ibid.*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 46-8).

31 See Allan, plate XXXIX.30.

32 *Ibid.*, pp. CXLIX—CL.

33 Smith's suggestion that these coins were issued by a chief calling himself Svāmī Brahmaṇya Yaudheya is obviously incorrect.

34 See Allan, *op. cit.*, plate XXXIX.22.

35 *Ibid.*, plate XL.10.

36 See *Proc. A.S.B.*, 1884, pp. 137-41.

37 See the article, 'The Yaudheyas as the political successors of the Kuṣāṇas in Northern India' by Dr. Altekar in *J.U.P.H.S.*, Vol. XVI, part 1, pp. 52-58 ; the same view is repeated in *Vākāṭaka-Gupta Age*, pp. 29-32 ; see also Altekar in *P.A.I.O.C.*, XII (1943), pp. 513 ff. See also *J.U.P.H.S.*, Vol. XIII, part 1, pp. 82-86, 'Further light on the Coinage of the Yaudheyas' by Prayag Dayal.

38 See *J.N.S I.*, Vol. V, pp. 29 ff.

39 See S. C. Kala in *J.N.S.I.*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 46-8.

40 III.232.11.

41 *Sabhā*, 32. 4-5.

42 P. C. Roy's translation, Vol. II, p. 76.

43 For a discussion on the date of this work, see *J.U.P.H.S.*, Vol. XV, part II, pp. 24-52, the article by Dr. V.S. Agrawala ; see also S. Levi in J.A. (1915) ; the latter has shown that the earliest Chinese translation of this work goes back to the 4th cent. A.D.

44 See *The Age of Imperial Unity*, p. 167 also *J.U.P.H.S.*, Vol. V, part II, p. 33 (fn.).

45 IV.1.178 ; and V.3.117.

46 *J. N. S. I.*, XIII, p. 162.

47 *C.I.I.*, III, pp. 250-1.

48 J.R.A.S., 1897., p. 130.

49 See *J.A.S.B.*, 1953, pp. 59 ff. (edited by Dr. D. C. Sircar) ; see also Mirashi, *E.I.*, Vol. XXVII, pp. 48ff. and D. R. Bhandarkar, *Progress Report of the Archaeological Survey of Western India*, 1903-4, p. 54.

50 Cf. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 94 ; also *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 97.1-4.

51 *Op. cit.*, p.60.

52 *E. I.*, Vol. XXX. pp. 59-62.

53 For further details see *ibid.*, pp. 59ff.
54 See *E. I.*, Vol. XVI, pp. 230-31.
55 See N. G. Majumdar in *J.A.S.B.* (1923), pp. 337 ff., also *The Monuments of Sanchi*, Vol. I, pp. 392 ff.; see also D C. Sircar, *Select inscriptions*, pp. 180-2. According to Mirashi (*C. I. I.*, Vol, IV, part 1, pp. 13 ff.) the inscription is dated in the Kalacuri-Cedi era. He reads the date as 102, and arrives at the date 351-52 A.D.
56 Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 181 (fn. 3).
57 See M.M. Nagar in *J.U.P.H.S*, Vol XVI, part 1, pp. 62-66.
58 For the original see *ibid.*, p. 66.
59 See *infra*, ch. VIII.
60 *Catalogue of the Coins of the Guptas*, Introduction, p. XCII.
61 *Guptakālin Mudrāin* in Hindi, pp. 142-3 (also p. 142, fn. 1); see also his *Catalogue of Gupta Coins in the Bayana Hoard*, Introduction, pp. CI-CII.
62 See Allan, *op. cit*, p. XCII.
63 *J.R.A.S.*, 1889, p. 105 also *I. M. Catalogue*, Vol. I, p. 13.
64 See *op. cit.*, pp. 84-6.
65 'Grapes', Altekar, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
66 *Numismatic Chronicles*, 1935, p. 225.
67 Altekar tries to fill up the gap by suggesting *ravindaḥ* (see *op. cit.*, p. CII).
68 Plate XV, figures, 5-11.
69 *Op. cit.*, plate XV, 12-14; Dr. J. N. Banerjea (*Development of Hindu Iconography*, p. 144) observes in this connection, "there can be very little doubt that here we find a replica of the image of the favourite deity of Kumāra Gupta I—probably the very image enshrined in a temple built by the Gupta king in the royal capital".
70 See Allan, *op. cit.*, Introduction, p. CI.
71 *Ibid.*, p. CI.
72 See *ibid.*, plate XIII, 6-19 (p. 73).
73 *Ibid.*, plate XIV, 14-17, and XV. 1-4.
74 *Ibid.*, Introduction, pp XCIII-XCVI (also pp. 107 ff.).
75 See *Ibid.*, plate XVIII, 1-15.
76 See *Ibid.*, plate XXI, 13-22.
77 Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, p. 279 (fn. 7).
78 *C.I.I.*, III, pp. 43ff; D. C. Sircar *op. cit.*, pp. 278 f.; also D. R. Bhandarkar, *List of Northern Indian Inscriptions*, No. 1263 (for other references). See also B. S. Suryavanshi, "Exploration at Bilsad" (*Journal of Asiatic Society*, Bombay, New Series, Vol, XXX, pp. 56-65); the Stone pillar inscription was first discovered by Cunningham (see his *Arch Sur. Ind.*, Vol. XI, pp. 19f.) who observes 'the remains of the temple must be hidden under the rubbish that has accumulated over the site'.
79 *I. H. Q.*, Vol. XV, p. 6.

80 *Development of Hindu Iconography*, p. 144 (fn.).

81 For a discussion on the date of Kālidāsa see *The Classical Age*, pp. 302-3 ; Mirashi, *Kālidāsa* (in Marathi), pp. 9-41 ; also *I. H.Q.*, Vol. XVIII, p. 128. Quite a few scholars at present, however, think that Kālidāsa flourished in the first cent. B. C.

82 The later cantos of this work (IX-XVII) which describe Kārttikeya's war with Tāraka are generally regarded as supplement to the poem composed by some later zealous admirer, 'who not only insists upon the birth of Kumāra but also brings out the motive of his birth by describing his victory over the demon Tāraka'. The language of the later cantos is certainly somewhat different from that of the earlier cantos. See *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, edited by S. N. Dasgupta, Vol. I, p. 127 and fn. It has, however, been argued that the later cantos were composed at a fairly early period at least before the 14th century A. D. (see also *Proc. of the 5th Oriental Conference*, Vol. I, pp. 43-4).

83 *J. U. P. H. S.*, IX, Part II, p. 36.

84 *E I.*, Vol. XIX, pp. 127-31, 'The Sohawal copper plate inscription of Mahārāja Sarvanātha' edited by R. R. Halder (see also D. R. Bhandarkar's *List of Northern Indian Inscriptions*, No. 1196).

85 *E.I.*, Vol. V, Appendix, p. 55, C 337 and C 392.

86 *E.I.*, Vol. XX, Appendix, p. 159 (fn. 5).

87 *C.I.I.*, III, pp, 126 ff.

88 *Rajaputana Museum Report*, 1923-24, p. 21.

89 *E.I.*, XIX, p.127 ff.

90 *E.I.*, XXIII, pp. 171 ff.

91 *Op. cit.*, p. 370 (fn. 1).

92 *Loc cit.*

93 *E I.*, Vol. XIX, p. 128.

94 See *A.S.I.A.R.*, 1911-12, pp. 50-1, Plate XVIII, figure 25. The seal, as Marshall thinks, resembles the coins of the Andhra and Kṣatrapa dynasties. ("The appellation *Vindhya-vedhana* has no parallel in Sanskrit literature" Marshall).

95 See Burgess, *Buddhist Stupas* of *Amaravati and Jaggayyapeta* p. 110. Plate LXII,

96 Menon, *History of Travancore*, pp. 170-1 ; see also Marshall, *op. cit.*, p. 51 (fn. 4).

97 *E.I.*, Vol. XIX, p. 102.

98 *E. I.*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 12-17.

99 *Ibid.*, p. 13, fn. 3.

100 *A.S.I.A.R*, 1911-12, p. 58, No. 83.

101 *A.S.I.A.R.*, 1913-14, p 125, Plate XLVII, No. 271.

102 J. N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

103 C.I.I., III, pp. 47 ff. (*Skanda-pradhānairbhuvi Mātṛbhiśca*). In the Great Epic Skanda's intimate relation with the 'Mothers' has been indicated more than once ; in chapter 46 of the *Śalyaparvan* a very large number of such Mothers have been mentioned ; some of the 'Mothers' are also referred to in the *Vanaparvan* account.

104 *J.A.S.B.*, 1889, pp. 84-105.

105 See *P.H.A.I.*, p. 590.

106 M.A.S.B., No. 66, p. 64.

107 *Op. cit.*, pp. 602 ff.

108 C.I.I., III, pp. 200ff.

109 *E. I.*, XIV, No. 5.

110 *E. I.*, XXXIII, pp. 148-9.

111 C.I.I., Vol. III, pp. 200 ff.

112 *E. I.*, XXIII, p. 122.

113 See *I. A.*, 1896, pp. 177 ff. ; also Kielhorn's *List of Northern Inscriptions*, No. 603 and *E. I.*, XXXI, pp. 277-98.

114 Line 11 of Lalitaśūra's inscription of the year 22.

115 *E. I.*, XIII, pp. 109-21.

116 *The Himalayan District of North West Provinces of India*, Vol. II, p. 468, forming Vol. XI of the *Gazetteer of North-Western Provinces*, 1884, pp. 469-85.

117 *E. I.*, Vol. XXXI, p. 279.

118 *Malaviya Commemoration Volume*, p. 195 & *Select Inscriptions*, p. 257.

119 *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* (G. O. S.), p. 47.

120 This *Śloka* is found in all the published editions of the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* (viz. those published by Chowkhamba, Vaṅgāvāsī and Venkaṭeśvara press).

121 *Hist. of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. V, part II, p. 889.

122 *Studies in Puranic Records etc.*, p. 144.

123 This work was published in 1891 with a Bengali translation ; also reprinted in P. C. Sen's *Mahāsthān and its Environments*, pp. 25-28, published by Varendra Research Society. "It seems that it was composed by one living at or about Mahāsthān in Puṇḍravardhana". (Hazra, *op. cit.*, p. 162 fn.).

124 *Rāmacarita* (edited by Basak Majumdar and Banerjee), III. 9.

125 Report A. S. I. (B. circle), 1920-21, part II, p. 25.

126 *I. H. Q.*, 1933, p. 725.

127. *E. I.*, Vol. XXI.

128 *Madras Epigraphical Collection* No. 44 of 1904 ; for another inscription of Kalagallu, see *Madras Epigraphical Report*, 1914, part II, para 36, No. 234 of 1913.

129 *Collected Works of Sir R.G. Bhandarkar*, Vol. IV, p. 215.

130 C.I.I., Vol. IV, Introduction, LXXIV (fn. 2).

131 *E. I.*, Vol. XXVI, p. 99.

132 *E. I.*, Vol. XII, p. 307.

133 *E. I.*, Vol. XXII, p. 121.

134 *E. I.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 8-9.

135 *E. I.*, Vol. I. p. 23.

CHAPTER FOUR

Worship of Skanda-Kārttikeya in South India

Section A—Worship of Murugan :—In the early Tamil literature we come across a deity called Murugan. He appears in almost all the major works of the Śangam period, e. g. *Pattinapalai*,[1] *Porunarattarupadai*[2], *Perupanattrupadai*, *Kurinchipattu*, *Tolkappiyam*, *Naṛṛinai* and others ; but what is most interesting is that there is one celebrated poem in Tamil exclusively devoted to him. This is the famous Tamil idyll the *Tirumurugattrupadai*. It is generally supposed that the well-known poet and scholar Nakkirar is the author of the poem. An interesting legend is associated with the composition of this poem. After the dispute with god Śiva and punishment for his presumption the poet was ordered to have a pilgrimage to Banaras. On his way he was seized by a terrible demon along with 999 others. The demon instead of sitting down at once to his breakfast, first went to perform his daily ablutions and thus afforded time for the poet to compose the poem in praise of Murugan, who moved by its pathos appeared before the victim, killed tne 'fastiduous demon' and rescued Nakkirar and 999 fellow prisoners. Competent authorities including Prof. Sundaram Pillai would place the author in the fifth century A.D.[3]

The *Tirumurugattrupadai* is by far the most popular Tamil poem of the Śangam period. It is still read by thousands of devout people throughout the length and breadth of the Tamil-speaking world. Prof. Pillai observes in this connection, "in the general wreck of letters that followed the extinction of Madura College, Muruga's name seems to have served as a life-boat to this work of Nakkirar and to have saved it from the undeserved oblivion which overwhelmed its more illustrious compeers". As a matter of fact, this is considered to be the 11th book of the sacred hymns of the Śaivas, and with the devotees of Muruga it is a part of their daily liturgy.

The poem consists of 317 lines. It opens with an account of the splendour of the god Murugan. Then follows a beautiful description of the celestials and damsels that dance and sing around the god. Then we read the account of the terrible demonesses who go through the devil-dances, while the god cuts down the Asuras. Four shrines along with others of the god are described in this poem. They are—Tiruparankunram, Tiruchiralaivai, Tiruvavinakudi and Tiruveragam. It is interesting to note that all these shrines are situated on the hill-tops. The first shrine Tiruparankunram[4] is described as situated to the west of the city of Madura. Even to-day we can see the hill, but it is to the south-west to the present city. It has been supposed, therefore, that the old city was situated in a different location. The idol of Muruga is still there. Even the image of the poet Nakkirar still stands in this place. This shows the great popularity of the author with the devotees of Muruga. This place of pilgrimage also finds mention in the *Maduraikanchi*[5] (line 272) where it is described as a 'pleasant sacred mount'.

Tiruchiralaivai is to be identified with the modern Tiruchendur. This is 18 miles to the south-east of Srivaikuntham in the Tinnevelly district. The temple stands on a small rock. An interesting legend[6] is told about this sacred place. The town was so small that when Subrahmaṇya came with his army that he asked Viśvakarman to extend and improve it. Since then it came also to be known by such names as Tiruchchendil or Jayanthipuram or Srisandhinagara. According to the traditions Murugan's demi-gods wanted to have a place which was to be a mountainous tract by the side of the river on the sea, to worship him. Tiruchendur having all these advantages was selected for the purpose.

According to the tradition the temple was constructed by Ugrapāṇḍyan, the fifth descendant of the Pāṇḍya dynasty of Madura. The sculpture on the right wall shows the god sitting on a peacock and engaged in war with the demon Śūrapadma. On the left is depicted the images of Subrahmaṇya and his spouse seated on an elephant.[7] An early inscription of the Pāṇḍyan king Varaguṇa speaks of his monthly

grant of 1400 gold *kaśur* or coins to the temple and the injunction that this sum should be invested as a permanent loan among village assemblies, so that the interest therefrom might be spent on the temple.[8]

The third place Tiruvavinakudi, according to some commentators is situated on the Palni hills. This is one of the greatest South Indian *tīrthas* of this god. The place is only 40 miles from Dindigul on the Madras Dhanuskodi Railway line. A highly interesting legend is associated with the temple of this place. Śiva once gave two hillocks called Śiva and Śakti to the sage Agastya to carry them in the South to enable the latter to worship the god and goddess there. He, however, left them in a forest and returned to the South. Afterwards his disciple Iḍumbara, the great demon, obtained his permission to undertake the task himself. He proceeded to that place and carried the hillocks on his shoulders in the form of *Kavaḍi*.[9] While nearing the forest at Palni he stopped for a while. On attempting to lift them again he found those hillocks firmly fixed on the ground. He climbed on one of the hill, and saw a youth with a stick in hand and wearing only underwear and this boy claimed that the hills belonged to him. The boy was no other than the god Muruga-Subrahmaṇya. A fight ensued in which the demon was overwhelmed. At the request of the latter's wife he was restored to life. The demon then prayed to the god that he should be made to stand at his portal, for good, as the gatekeeper and "also that whoever in the *Kavaḍi* form similar to the process adopted by him in bringing these hillocks, should be blessed fully[10]". From this time the place became sacred to the god. It should also be noted that carrying of *Kavaḍi* is particularly associated with the worship of Murugan or Subrahmaṇya in South India. People who are in difficulties, resort to this form of worship, in order to obtain the blessings of the god.

Tiruveragam metioned in the *Tirumurugattrupadai* is generally identified with Kumbhakonam.

According to both Dr. G. U. Pope and S, W. Coomarswamy Murugan was originally a a demon of the South, Dr.

Pope refers to the dances of Murugan (described in the *Tirumurugatrupadai* and other Tamil poems) as devil-dances.[11] In the *Pura-Porul-Vemba-Malai*[12] Murugan is represented as the son of Koṛṛavai 'the Victorious one' who was evidently the object of worship among the oldest people of the South. Dr. Pope further observes that she is still worshipped under various names in the Devil-temples which are still found in many Southern village. In the poem *Tirumuragattrupadai* too, Murugan is called the son of Koṛṛavai.

According to some scholars Murugan was originally the War-god of the Dravidians as he is represented in many early Tamil poems as the 'patron-deity of the Kuravas or hunting tribes. "Probably this god is not an entirely imaginary being but a king that was deified".[13] This thing often happened in case of heroes of primitive community. According to P. T. S. Iyengar[14] he was the patron of pre-nuptial love. That this god created love-frenzy in girls is apparent from the following lines of one of the oldest poems in Tamil language—

"Here festivals are always held
Harmonius with the dances wild
Of frenzied maids by the Red-god stirred,
The flutes do pipe, the lyres do twang
The drums roll loud, and the tabors sound".[15]

The *Silappadikāram*[16] (canto XXIV) also represents this god as a favourite deity of the hill-maidens ; we quote here a few lines"--O good girl with bracelets, I am moved to laughter. To cure me of the (love) sickness caused by the owner of the cool hill on which pepper grows, my mother who is not aware of idle talk in the village (*alar*) thinks that the spirit of *kadamban* (Murugan) has manifested itself in me, and has sent for the Velan's *Veriyadal* intending to abjure it."[17]

Murgan is also known as Seyon or the Red-god. He is also repeatedly referred to as a hill-god or the god of the high mountains.[18] In the *Tirumurugattrupadai* Murugan receives the following epithets—'the spouse of a wife of spotless purity' ; 'the Red-god (Seyon)', 'the child of six mothers',

'the son of the god under the banyan tree', 'the child of Koṛṛavai, 'the child of the Ancient One', 'the captain of the heavenly hosts', 'the god of Kurinchi', 'the tall god', 'the god of the hills'.

There is very little doubt that Murugan was originally a local god in the Dravidian country and only at a somewhat later date he came to be identified with North Indian War-god Skanda-Kārttikeya. They had many common traits and that is why the two gods coalesced to give birth to the popular god Subrahmaṇya. It should be remembered that both Murugan and Skanda were originally War-gods.

The popularity of the god Murugan with the ancient Dravidians is proved by the occurrence of his name and festivals held in his honour in almost all the Tamil works of the Śangam period. We have already referred to his festivals mentioned in the *Pattinapalai* which is placed in the fourrh century A. D. by such an authority as Prof. Sundaram Pillai. In thn *Āgamas* (collection of 400 odes) too, his great popularity is mentioned. In the *Āgama* 118 we have "the god Murugan shines in the little village on the sides of the high high hill where the whole rivulet sounds. The men wear clusters of *vengai* flowers dripping with honey and along with their women dance in the streets keeping time with *Tondaga* drum.[19]

Some historians are not prepared to accept the theory that Murugan was originally a Dravidian god. V. Venkayya says,[20] "it seems to me that Murugan is not a new name but only a Tamil translation of the Sanskrit designation Kumāra. There is no reason to suppose that Murugan was an ancient Dravidian god afterward assimilated with Skanda"; but it is difficult to accept this view. It is apparent that there cannot be any philological conection between the words Murugan and Kumāra. Further some of the traits of Murugan as found in the ancient Tamil literature are foreign to the Aryan conception of Skanda Kārttikeya. Dr. Pope's view that originally he was a a demon of the South also seems untenable. On the other hand there is much force in the theory that he was originally a king of the Dravidian hill tribes.

Some of the South Indian scholars like Arvamuthan, Nilakanta Sastri and Karmarkar have tried to trace the history of the Murugan cult from pre-historical times. Nilakanta Sastri observes in his "*Development of Religion in South India*" (p. 21), "the undoubted antiquity of his cult among the Tamils is attested by the discovery in pre-historic urnfields at Ādichchanallur of bronze cocks, iron spears and other objects similar to those employed by modern worshippers of Murugan when they are on a pilgrimage carrying the *Kavaḍi* in fulfilment of a vow".[21] It has even been claimed that Murugan as a deity was known to the people of Mohenjodaro and Harappa. Father Heras[22] found the words '*Murugan adu*' 'that is Murugan' in one of the seals of Mohenjodaro ; but Heras' reading of the Harappan seals is not generally accepted.

Dr. Karmarkar[23] thinks that the term '*Mūradeva*' of the *Ṛgveda*[24] is the same as Tamil Murugan. This too, is a mere surmise and cannot be accepted in the absence of more tangible evidence. Whatever may be the real antiquity of the cult there cannot be any doubt that Murugan was a highly popular deity from a considerably early period in South India. The *Tolkappiyam*, porul 60[25] contains an invocation to Murugan. In the *Naṟṟinai*[26] we have several references to this deity believed to be causing troubles to young girls. For that purpose *bali* or offerings were made by the priests (called *Velan*) to the god. We have already referred to the lines of the *Pattinapalai* where there is a description of the frenzied maids stirred by the Red-god (Seyon), who is no other than Murugan. He was actually the favourite deity of the women of the Kuravar tribe. This tribe was famous in later literature as the heroes of the romantic love at first sight. They led a semi-nomadic life.[27] "Poets are very fond of comparing the leanness in the sweetheart owing to her separation from her lover to the change effected in the physical features of a Murugan-possessed person". The Tamil work *Pari-Padal* delineates him as proficient in the art of 'love clandestine'.[28]

Following are the different explanations of the term Murugan suggested by Dr. Pope[29]—(1) perfume or by synecdoche a flower ; (2) the wood being scented ; (3) honey

which is collected by bees from the flowers of plants; (4) toddy, which is as sweet as honey or which is obtained from the spadix of the palmyra or cocoanut tree; (5) youth or the flower of age; (6) beauty; (7) elevation of mind; (8) Murugan or the Dravidian hill-deity in honour of whom dances are performed under the *murugu* tree or Kārttikeya with whose attributes Murugan was invested after being admitted to the Hindu pantheon; (9) a festival—originally dances and feasts in honour of Murugan; (10) an ornament which adds to the grace of the wearer.

The poem *Tirumurugattrupadai* belongs to the eve of the final absorption of Aryanism by the Tamils, when the Tamil Murugan had just been identified with the Aryan six-faced god Kārttikeya, the foster-child of the Kṛttikās. "In it we can notice the dying Tamil rite of the Murugan worship coalescing with the rite of the Aryan worship of Kumāra-Kārttikeya". There is no dearth of Aryan element in the poem although non-Aryan element predominates. Lines 47-56 give a vivid picture of the frightful demoness with dry hair, irregular teeth, large mouth, yellow eyes rolling with anger etc. When the Aryan conquered the South they found in Murugan a counterpart of their War-god Skanda-Kārttikeya. The conquered Dravidians on their part saw the similarity of the conquerors' god with theirs. So the ever-youthful Murugan was easily identified with the Aryan god Kumāra-Kārttikeya.

The name Murugan like Subrahmaṇya is conspicious by its absence in the early inscriptions[80] found from South India. Neither the inscriptions of the Śātavāhanas nor those of the Ikṣvākus, Pallavas, Kadambas or the Nalas mention the name of this highly popular Tamil god of the Śangam period. The reason is that he is essentially a god of the Tamil-speaking Dravidians, and as none of the dynasties, mentioned above, is ethnically connected with them, we find no reference to the Dravidian god Murugan or Seyon in their inscriptions.

Section B—History of Skanda-Subrahmaṇya worship in South India. The popularity of Skanda-Kārttikeya with the Śātavāhanas is disclosed by such names as Skanda-nāga-śataka and Skandasvāti. The first name is mentioned in a Kanheri

inscription.[31] and the latter name is found in the *Puranic* list of the Andhra kings According to Dr. Raychaudhuri and others they are the names of a single person. Nānāghāt record[32] (*circa* first century B. C.) mentions Kumāra along with other gods (*Namaḥ Kumāravarasa*). This is the earliest epigraphic reference to this god found anywhere in India. As the Śātavāhanas were probably Northerners, it is natural that they should be acquainted with the Aryan god Kumāra-Kārttikeya.

Kārttikeya's popularity with the Ikṣvākus is known from their inscriptions found in Nāgārjunikoṇḍa. Cāṃtamūla of this dynasty (third century A.D.) was definitely a votary of the god Mahāsena (*Virūpākhapati Mahāsena-parigahatasa*).[33] *Virūpākhapati* as an epithet of Skanda is absent in the Great Epic and the Purāṇas. Vogel takes the term in the sense of the hosts of which Skanda is the leader. The word indicates a class of snakes in a snake-charm in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*.[34] *Virūpākṣa* is an ordinary epithet applied to the *Rākṣasas* and other spirits in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*.[35] There are passages in the Great Epic where Kārttikeya's intimate connection with the *Rākṣasas* and others has been referred to.[36]

Another inscription from Nāgārjunikoṇḍa[37] mentions one Eliśrī who is said to be a devotee of the god Mahāsena. This Eliśrī was no doubt a subordinate of the Ikṣvāku kings and does not appear to have belonged to his master's family.[38]

The great popularity of Kārttikeya with the Ikṣvākus is also proved by the discovery of the remains of a Kārttikeya temple during 1956-7 excavations at Nāgārjunikoṇḍa ; one of the inscribed pillars of the temple discloses the name of one Canda-Śakti-Kumāra who was probably the founder of the temple.[39] Some images of the god have also been unearthed from the same site (see ch. VIII).

Another South Indian dynasty, the Kadambas are known from their records to have been the devotees of Skanda-Kārttikeya. In the Talgunda inscription of Śāntivarman, Mayūraśarman, the founder of the dynasty, is described as favoured (*anudhyāta*) and anointed *senāpati* by Ṣaḍānana and

the Mothers.[40] The name Mayūraśarman itself is also highly interesting. In this connection it is also interesting to note that in almost all the Kadamba records the family has been described as '*anudhyāta*' by Svāmī Mahāsena (Ṣaḍānana) and the Mothers. It must also be noticed in this connection that the Sirsi grant[41] of Ravivarman describes the king as *Kadamba-Mahāsena-pratima*.

Kārttikeya's popularity with the Pallavas of both Sanskrit and Prakrit charters is indirectly proved by the occurrence of such names as Skandavarman, Kumāraviṣṇu. Skandaśiṣya and Skandamūla among the kings of this dynasty. Besides these, we are also confronted with such names as Vijaya-Skanda-varman and Siva-Skandavarman. Skandavarman was the name of several kings of this dynasty. More than two kings bore the name Kumāraviṣṇu. The name Skandaśiṣya is highly suggestive. It indicates that the king with that name was really a follower of the War-god.

Kings of another South Indian dynasty are known from their records to have been the votaries of the god Skanda. We are referring here to the Nalas of the Amaravati district.[42] At least two of the kings of this dynasty are known from their inscriptions to have been the worshippers of the gods Śiva and Skanda. A record[43] of a king called Bhavattavarman was found at Rithapur in the Morsi taluk of the Amaravati district. The record is dated in the 11th year of the king. We learn from the first line of the inscription that Śiva and Skanda bestowed the glory of royalty on him (*MaheśvaraMahāsenātisṛṣṭarājyavibhavaḥ*)[44].

The Kesaribeda plates of Arthpati Bhaṭṭāraka[45] also describes the king Bhavattavarman as *MaheśvaraMahāsenātisṛṣṭa-rājyavibhavaḥ*.[46] These two records, therefore, establish the connection of these two kings with Śiva and Skanda. Dr. Sircar further draws our attention to the fact that in the Bhīṭā seal there is almost a similar expression. He suggests on the basis of this analogy that the king mentioned in the Bhīṭā seal might have been connected with the Nalas. He further points out that the characters of the above-mentioned seal strongly resemble those of the records of the Ikṣvākus.[47]

The Cālukyas, who came to the limelight from the middle of the sixth cent. A.D., is another South Indian dynasty described in the inscriptions as being favoured by Kārttikeya. All their inscriptions contain the stock expression "the family acquired uninterrupted prosperity through the favour of Kārttikeya."[48] A number of images of this god is found in the caves of Aihole (see ch. VIII). A six-headed granite image of this god was unearthed from Rajahmundry, the modern site of ancient Puṣpagiri, the capital of the Eastern Cālukyas.[49] The Bejwada (Kṛṣṇā district) Pillar inscription[50] of the Eastern Cālukya king Yuddhamalla (*circa* 10th century A.D.) describes the construction of a temple of Kārttikeya and *maṭham* by the above-mentioned king. The second line of the inscription expressly describes him as a devotee of Gomarasvāmī (i.e. Kumārasvāmī or Kārttikeya), The fourth line tells us that the son of Trinayana (i.e. Kārttikeya) of the celebrated town of Chebrolu came to attend a festival at Bejwada and so liked the place that he wished to remain there. Coming to know of this the king Malla (i.e. Yuddhamalla) built a temple and *maṭham* for the god.[51] The inscription, therefore, gives another proof of the devotion of the Cālukya kings to the War-god Skanda-Kārttikeya. We get, however, at present, no trace of any such temple dedicated to Kārttikeya either at Bejwada or Chebrolu.

We have already observed that the name Subrahmaṇya (although of North Indian origin) is at present the South Indian name of the god Skanda-Kārttikeya. The earliest epigraphical reference to the temple of this god is found in a Pallava inscription of Nandivarman at Mallam[52] in the Nellore district (called Tiruvanbur in the inscription). The inscription is found on the floor of the Subrahmaṇya temple at Mallam, Guḍur. It is dated in the fifteenth year of his reign and seems to register a grant made at the request of an Aḷūva chief (who was probably a Nāga)[53]. A record of the early (Gaṅga) Pallava king Narasiṃhavarman from Kirmuttugur[54] records a gift to a worshipper of Ṣaṇmātura (i.e. Subrahmaṇya or Kārttikeya).

According to Prof. Jouveau Dubreuil,[55] the third figure in the celebrated *Trimūrti* cave at Mahabalipuram (built during

the reign of the Pallava king Mahendravarman I) is Subrahmaṇya in the form of Brahma-Śāstā. Gopinath Rao also accepts this argument of that well-known French scholar (see also *infra*, ch. VIII). This once more shows the great popularity of this god with the Pallavas. We have already pointed out the popularity enjoyed by this god among the early Pallavas of both Prakrit and Sanskrit charters.

The Coḷas, who were great patrons of Brahmanical culture and religion, held this god in high esteem. Most of the great Śiva temples, built during their period, had separate shrines for the god Subrahmaṇya. At Kannanur there is a *Svayaṃpradhāna* ("a temple in the sanctum of which Skanda is installed") temple of the god Bāla Subrahmaṇya. This temple was constructed during the reign of Rājakeśarī identified with Āditya Coḷa. "It is perhaps the earliest dated *Karrali* or temple built with stone from the base to the finial".[56]

A record dated in the fourth year of Pārthivendravarman (956-969 A. D.)[57] 'who took away the head of Vīra Pāṇḍya' registers a gift of land to Subrahmaṇya Bhaṭṭāra at Uttaramallūr by a merchant of Kāñchīpura named Sandiran Elunurruvan. The record was found on the South wall of Subrahmaṇya temple at Uttaramallūr.[58]

An inscription[59] found at Chebrolu (Kṛṣṇā district) dated in the Śaka year 1049=1127 A.D. of the 9th year of the great Coḷa emperor Vikrama Coḷa and engraved on a slab of the Keśavasvāmin temple records the grant of some land to the temple of Kumārasvāmin (line 18) or Mahāsena (line 33). Probably the inscription originally belonged to Kumārasvāmin temple which is now called Nāgeśvara.[60] The donor Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Nambeya (line 30) of the Durjaya family was a feudatory of Vikrama Coḷa. He was evidently a devotee of the god Subrahmaṇya. That he was a powerful feudatory is proved by such epithets as 'Lord of the city of Kollipaka' and 'Lord of the country of six thousands (villages) on the Southern bank of the Kṛṣṇavennā' (lines 25-27) etc.

The Pithapuram plates[61] of Vīra Coḷa (year 23) refer to Taniyaperuman which stands for Tangaiperuman i.e. the lord of Tanigai which is another name of Tiruttani near Arkonam.

The temple of this place is dedicated to the god Subrahmaṇya. A four-armed image of Subrahmaṇya was set up by Rājarāja I in his 29th year in the Rājarājeśvara temple at Tanjore.[62]

Several places in South India are associated with the worship of the god Subrahmaṇya. Some of them have already been noticed above. We will now take note of other places sacred to Subrahmaṇya in South India.

Swamimalai, which is to the west of Kumbhakonam is another place sacred to the god Subrahmaṇya in South India. According to a well-known tradition, Subrahmaṇya here initiated his father Śiva in the mysteries of *Praṇava mantra*[63] which his father had forgotten owing to a sin incurred in killing a *Rākṣasa*. This is the reason why the shrine of the son is on the top of the hill and that of the father (who appears here as a disciple) is situated below. According to another local tradition, Indra, the king of gods, when he was troubled here by the demon Arikeśa, obtained the blessings of Subrahmaṇya. The grateful god then presented Subrahmaṇya with a white elephant. Even now we find here an image of an elephant in front of the deity instead of the peacock.[64]

Another place Vaithiswarankoil, situated nine miles from Mayavaram, is regarded as sacred to this god. Here he is said to have obtained his lance from the goddess Śakti. Subrahmaṇya is worshipped here in the form of a youth, hence the name Muthukumāra. According to the tradition, Skanda's mother Pārvatī had asked him to assume one face, which he did. His mother was so much pleased that she presented him with a *vel* (i.e. lance) to slay the *Rākṣasas*.

At Trichengode Skanda is worshipped in the form of a serpent. It should be noted that the worship of Subrahmaṇya in the Tamil-speaking regions is also connected with that of serpent. In the well-known village Subrahmaṇya in Canara South we have the images of both Subrahmaṇya and a serpent. According to Dr. Kittel the place was originally sacred to Subrahmaṇya but later it came to be associated with the serpent-worship.[65] It should be noted that "the common name Subba or Subbarāya found among the Telegu, Canarese and the Tamil people is explained to be both a

contraction of Subrahmaṇya and synonym for serpent". The 6th day of the lunar month is held as sacred to both serpents and Subrahmaṇya[66]. As the temples of Subrahmaṇya are found on hill-tops and as the serpents are also found in the hills, the common worship of both of them is not difficult to comprehend. A story recorded in the *Skanda Purāṇa*[67] depicts him as rescuing snakes from a demon called Pralamba.

At Anaimalai, not far from Madura, is a rock-cut shrine of Subrahmaṇya with one goddess. Reference has already been made to the place called Tiruttani near Arkonam which was also famous for Subrahmaṇya-worship. The beautiful temple of Subrahmaṇya at Tanjore is another example of the architectural triumph of the South.[68] According to a well-known story current in the South the celebtated Śaivite saint Appar was refused admission to it by Subrahmaṇya-worshippers. This so infurlated the great saint that this temple was not celebrated in his hymns or in those of any other Śaivite saints. It is also interesting to note that unlike most other temples in the orthodox South, the Śūdras are admitted to the apartment next the shrine and the valiyans ("a hunting, fishing, iron-making caste")[69], who are usually not admitted at all, here come as far as the great Bull.[70]

Numerous other temples of Subrahmaṇya exist in the South, particularly in the Tamil-speaking areas. Mention may be made in this connection to the temples at Valliyur,[71] Kalugumalai,[72] Panpulipatnam or Panpuli,[73] Piranmalai[74], Bodinayakkanur[75] and Viramalai.[76]

In this connection the following observation of Gopinath Rao[77] may be quoted, "Subrahmaṇya is almost exclusively a South Indian deity. There is not a village, however small, which does not possess a shrine for Subrahmaṇya. In fact the popularity of this deity with the South Indian is so great as to induce him to build shrines for him in all places, such as towns, villages, gardens, mountain-tops and other odd places",

There is also no dearth of the temples of Subrahmaṇya or Kātttikeya in other parts of South India. The temple of Kumārasvāmī, which is situated six miles from Sandur in the Bellary district, Mysore, is a celebrated place of Kārttikeya-

worship in that part of the province. "The temple is evi dently one of great antiquity judging from its structural appearance".[78] This temple, according to Mudaliar, reminds one of Viṭhoba temple at Pandharpur. Two local legends have been recorded by Mudaliar in his admirable article on this temple.[79]

According to one of the legends Lord Kumāra, when he accepted the leadership of the forces of the gods, was installed as such at this place. To commemorate this event, Lord Kārttikeya or Kumāravāmī consented to stand still here and a temple was accordingly built in his honour. As his father and mother were also there to witness the ceremony, two temples were built for them. Another legend about the construction of this temple is much more interesting from the mythological point of view. After the defeat of Tāraka, Kārttikeya was requested by his mother Pārvatī to wed a girl whom she had selected, and on asking how she looked, he was told that she resembled herself, whereupon he became so indignant that he vowed that he would not marry a girl who was like his mother. Pārvatī was much vexed, and she angrily demanded of him the mother's milk, which the son at once vomited forth. The mother was all the more vexed at this, and Śiva had to intervene to appease the wrath of his son and wife. To commemorate this event three temples were built for them, son, mother and father. There is yet another legend which is somewhat different from the one just related. According to this story, Kārttikeya requested his mother to select a bride who would be like his mother in appearance. This so infuriated the mother that she charged him with ingratitude and demanded all the milk with which she had nursed him, and the angry son accordingly vomited all the milk.

These legends perhaps explain why no woman is allowed to enter this temple[80] even at the present day.

In some parts of the Deccan this god is worshipped as Khaṇḍobā or Khaṇḍevar, 'Sword-father'[81]. He is everywhere revered there as a household deity and numerous temples are erected for his worship. The shepherds regard him as their

tutelary deity. The god is generally represented as riding on a horse and attended by a dog and his wife Malsāra.[82] Oppert connects this god with the aboriginal Khaṇḍ tribe of Khandesh and its neighbourhood.[83] The god is also known as Mallāri because according to some legends, recorded in a local *Māhātmaya* called the *Mallāri-Māhātmya*, he killed a demon called Malla ,who beat and ill-used the Brāhmaṇas, at a place called Jejuri[84], 30 miles east of the city of Poona. It is at present a famous place of pilgrimage. One of the inscriptions of the Jejuri temple gives the date *Śaka* 1303 i.e. 1381 A.D.[85] There is another celebrated temple of Khaṇḍobā at Pal in Satara district. This place was originally called Rajapur ; according to a local legend the god appeared before a milk-maid called Palai in whose honour the name of the village was changed from Rajapur to Pal[86]. This god is also worshipped in Baroda and Bhavsari, Poona district.[87]

W. Crooke[88] thinks that this god is probably a deified non-Aryan prince. The philological connection of Khaṇḍa with Skanda is not difficuit to understand.[89] The worship of the god Khaṇḍobā represents a debased form of Skanda-worship and shows obvious signs of contamination with forest tribes.[90] It is also of some interest to note that this god is not in any way connected with peacock, the well-known *Vāhana* of Skanda-Kārttikeya.

In Kerala also, Subrahmaṇya-worship is not unknown. He is worshipped chiefly by a tribe called Muduvans as Palaniandavar.[91] Haripad in Quilon was a famous place of Subrahmaṇya-worship in ancient days.[92] The temple has lately been burnt down by fire.[93] This place has yieldcd a number of inscriptions. The temples of Subrahmaṇya are also found at Vellanad, 7 miles from Trivandrum[94] and at Ilanji. A number of inscriptions have been found in these places. The inscriptions from Vellanad temple are undated but attributable to the 14th century A.D. An inscription of the *Śaka* year 1331 (=1409 A.D.) tells us that in his 14th regnal year Alagam Kulaśekharadeva repaired the central shrine at Ilanji which was dilapidated.[95] This proves that

the temple was in existence much before the date mentioned above.

In Ceylon Subrahmaṇya is worshipped as Kandaswami (a corrupt form of Skandasvāmī or Kārttikeya). At Katargam in South Ceylon there is a well-known temple of this god.[96] He is known there as Katagama Deviyo. According to the local legends, Kārttikeya met his consort Valli Amma at this place and he wooed her in the disguise of of a monk. When his advances were rejected, his brother Gaṇapati appeared on his behalf and forced the maiden to seek the arms of the War-god.

The great popularity enjoyed by Kārttikeya or Subrahmaṇya in South India is also mentioned in North Indian works. In the *Kathāsaritsāgara*[97] mention is made of the shrines of Kārttikeya in South India—*Yayau Svāmikumāraṃ darśane Dakṣiṇāpatham*. Tawney gives the following translation of the line, "went to the Deccan in order to visit the shrine of the god Kārttikeya"[98]. It is not possible to say what particular Subrahmaṇya-tīrtha is referred to in this line. Nevertheless, it proves that the vast popularity enjoyed by the god in South India was known even to the poet of Kashmir.[99] A verse in the *Bhaviṣyottara Purāṇa*[100] also attests to the popularity of the cult of Kārttikeya in South India—

Yasyāṃ paśyanti Gāṅgeyaṃ Dakṣiṇāpathamāśritam I
Brahmahatyādipāpaiste muñcante nātra saṃśayaḥ[101] II

Gāṅgeya referred to here is another name of the god Kārttikeya who is also described in the Purāṇas and the epics as the son of Gaṅgā.

It is interesting to note that among the *tīrthas*, described in the various Purāṇas as sacred to Skanda-Kārttikeya, only one can be located in South India. The other *tīrthas* are situated in various places of Āryāvarta. The paucity of references to South Indian *tīrthas* can be explained by pointing out that most of the Purāṇas were composed in North India. In the 36th chapter of the *Kūrma Purāṇa*[102] mention is made of one Svāmitīrtha. This is referred to here as *Mahātīrtha*.

This *tīrtha* has been placed by the poet of the *Kūrma Purāṇa* between the rivers Kāverī and Tāmraparṇī. So there can not be any doubt that this particular place of pilgrimage, was situated in the heart of the Coḷa country. The relevant lines may be quoted in this connection—

Svāmitīrthaṃ mahātīrthaṃ triṣu lokeṣu viśrutam ।
tatra sannihito nityaṃ Skando'maranamaskṛtaḥ ॥
snātvā Kumāradhārāyāṃ kṛtvā devāditarpaṇam ।
Ārādhya Ṣaṇmukhaṃ devaṃ Skandena saha modate ॥

This place should be identified with one of the shrines referred to in the *Tirmurugattrupadai*.

It is also of some interest to note that the name Subrahmaṇya is entirely absent in the early inscriptions found in South India. No reference to this name is found in any epigraph before the eighth century A.D., although, as we have already noticed, the name is as old as the *Baudhāyana Dharma Śāstra*[103] and, therefore, of North Indian origin.

NOTES

1 This work according to Prof. Sundaram Pillai was composed in the 4th cent. A.D.

2 See the Introduction to the *Pattupattu* (edited with a translation by J.V. Chelliah).

3 *Ibid.*, p. XVIII ; another authority, J.M.S. Pillai places Nakkirar in the first cent. A.D. (see *Two Thousand Years of Tamil Literature*, p. 55, fn. 2). According to some scholars there were two Nakkirars, see *Hist. of Tamil Language and Literature* by S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, pp. 34 f. The entire Śangam literature is placed between the first and the fourth century of the Christian era by Prof. Nilakanta Sastri, see *The Coḷas*, second edition, p. 55.

4 In *Madura District Gazetteer* Vol. I, we get the following description of the Murugan-Subrahmaṇya shrine at Tiruparankunram, "the innermost shrine is cut out of the solid rock. In front of this are a series of *maṇḍapams*, built at different levels, one below the other. The lowest or outermost of these is an exceedingly fine example of this class or work. Its roof is of great stone slabs and is supported by 48′ tall, carved, monolithic pillars" (pp. 280-1).

5 Another old Tamil work, and probably older than the *Tirumurugattrupadai*, see *Pattupattu*, pp. 229-30.

6 See P.V.J. Ayyar, *South Indian Shrines*, pp. 214-5.

7 *Ibid.*, pp. 214-5.

8 *E. I.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 102 ff. This place is also mentioned in the *Silappādikāram*, another old Tamil work (see Dikshitar's translation, p. 277). ' Even Muhammadens, it is said, occasionally make votive offerings to the god" (see *Tinnevelly District Gazetteer*, Vol. I, pp. 505ff). For some other references to this place in early Tamil literature, see J.M.S. Pillai's monograph *Tiruchendur*, p. 1 (fn). See also *ibid.*, p. 18 (fn) for some other inscriptions of this temple.

9 From Tamil *Kavu* = to carry on the shoulder and *taḍi* = pole.

10 For further details see P.V.J. Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 156 ff. ; also *South Indian Festivities* by the same author, pp. 148-50 ; see also J.M.S. Pillai's monograph, *Palni, the sacred hill of Muruga* and the article on Palni in *Madura District Gazetteer*, Vol. I, pp. 304 ff.

11 *Tamilian Antiquary*, 1910, pp. 17-19.

12 *Ibid.*, pp. 17 ff.

13 See *Pattupattu*, p. 332.

14 See *J.I.H.*, 1928, pp. 84-5 ; also his *Hist. of the Tamils*, p. 76.

15 *Pattinapalai*, lines, 178-182.

16 Translated by V.R.R. Dikshitar.

17 See Dikshitar's translation, p. 278.

18 See *Tirumurugattrupadai* and *Kurinchipattu*, line 211.

19 Quoted in P.T.S. Iyengar's *History of the Tamils*, p. 278 (fn).

20 *S. I. I.*, Vol. II, part V, p. (38).

21 The Tamil lexicon describes *Kavaḍi* as a "decorated pole of wood with an arch over it, carried on shoulders with offerings mostly for Murugan's temple".

22 See *N.I.A.*, I, p. 52 ; also the article 'The Religion of Mohenjodaro People according to Inscriptions', *Journal of the University of Bombay*, Vol. I (July, 1936) ; *Sardesai Com. Volume*, pp. 228 f. ; see also *J.I.H.*, Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 24-25.

23 See *The Religions of India*, Vol. I, pp. 128-35.

24 VII. 100.24 ; X. 87.2 ; X 87.14.

25 See C.V.N. Ayyar, *Origin and Early History of Śaivism in South India*, pp. 106 ff.

26 See verses 34, 47, 173, 182, 351 and 376.

27 See *J.I.H.*, 1928, pp. 84-5.

28 *Journal of Oriental Research* (Madras), Vol. VI, p. 334

29 *Tamilian Antiquary*, 1910, p. 17 (fn).

30 Some of the later inscriptions mention the name 'Muruga' ; a 12th century inscription (*E.I.*, Vol. XXVII, p. 104) refers to the 'golden image' of Muruga.

31 See Rapson, *Andhra Coins* etc., p. LIII.

32 *Arch. sur. W.I.*, Vol. V, pp. 60ff. ; Bühler takes the term *Kumāra-varasa* as an epithet of prince Vedisri and translates it a s'best of royal princes' (*ibid.*, p. 6); but Mirashi has shown that *Kumāra varasa* here signifies Kumāra-Kārttikeya (see *C.I.I.*, Vol. IV, Introduction, p. CXLVII and fn. IX ; also *J.N.S.I.*, Vol. XIV, pp. 29ff. and *E.I.*, Vol. XXVII, p. 4, fn. 4).

33 *E.I.*, Vol. XX, p. 6 ; see also K. Gopalachari, *Early History of Andhra Country*, pp, 131ff. and p. 166.

34 See Oldenberg, II, p. 110.

35 Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 39.

36 *Mbh.*, XIII. 86.26.

37 Belonging to the 11th year of Ehuvala Cāṃtamūla, *E.I.*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 147 f.

38 For the religious leaning of the Ikṣvākus see *E.I.*, XXXIV, p. 19.

39 *Indian Archaeology*, 1956-7, *A Review*, p. 36, "the structure itself comprised an L-shaped pillared wing of which the portion at a lower level to the south, containing massive pedestals might have been the shrine proper, leading the upper pillared hall by balustraded steps" ; for the remains of the temple, see *ibid.*, plate LIV *A* ; for the inscribed pillared record, see *ibid.*, plate LIX and for the temple-complex in the interior see plate LIV B ; see also *The Adyar Library Bulletin*, Vol. XXV, pp. 518-9.

40 *Ṣaḍānanaḥ yam=abhiṣikta-vān=anudhyāya Senāpatiṃ mātṛbhiḥ saha* : the passage has been taken to mean that Mayūraśarman was anointed by Ṣaḍānana after he meditated on Senāpati, Dr. Sircar refuses to

accept this interpretation. The verb, he says, is *anudhyāya* (after favouring), its subject is *Ṣaḍānanaḥ* and its object is *yam*. It is the same as *anudhyāta* (favoured) in passages like *Mahāsena-mātṛgaṇa—anudhyāta-abhiṣikta* (favoured and anointed by Mahāsena and Mothers occurring in many Kadamba records ; see *Successors of the Śātavāhanas*, pp. 238 f. ; see also *N.I.A.*, Vol. V, pp, 131-5.

41 *E.I.*, Vol. XVI, p. 264.

42 "They were in possession of territories formerly occupied by the Vākāṭakas", D.C. Sircar, *E. I.*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 13.

43 Edited by Gupte ln *E. I.* Vol. XIX, pp. 102 ff.

44 Dr. Sircar thinks that this record may have belonged to the reign of Arthapati, who was the grandson of Bhavattavarman (*E.I.*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 13).

45 *Ibid.*, pp. 12-17.

46 For another Nala record, see *E.I.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 155 ff.

47 For the association of the names Maheśvara and Mahāsena in the Great Epic see XII.339.93 (*MaheśvaraMahāsenau*).

48 *Bombay. Gaz.*, Vol. I, part 2, p. 337.

49 See *Proceedings and Transactions of 7th All-India Oriental Conference*, Baroda, 1938, pp. 773-4.

50 See *E.I.*, Vol. XV, pp. 150-9, edited by J. Ramayya Pantalu.

51 According to C. R. Krishnamachari (p. 365 of the same Vol.) actually king Malla came from Chebrolu to this place and built the temple (but J. R. Pantalu refuses to accept this, see *E. I.*, Vol. XIX, pp. 88-9).

52 See *Nellore Inscriptions*, edited by Butterworth and Chetty, Gudur, 54, pp. 429-30. A very large number of inscriptions of the Coḷa period are found on this temple (see *ibid.*, Gudur, 55-80) ; they include inscriptions of Rājarājadeva (4th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 13th and 27th years), Kulottuṅga (26th year) and others.

53 See *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 281 (fn. 3) ; also *I.A.*, (1908), p. 352.

54 *E.I.*, Vol. IV, p. 178.

55 *E.I.*, Vol. XVII, p.16 ; for the figure see *Archelogie du Sud de 1, Inde*, Vol. II, Plate, XVIII B.

56 See *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol IV, pp. 309-35 'Skanda Cult in South India' by K. R. Venkataratnam.

57 Cf. Prof. Nilakanta Sastri's *The Coḷas*, p. 149.

58 *S.I.I.*, Vol. III, part III, pp. 348-9.

59 *E.I.*, Vol. VI, p. 224.

60 *Loc. cit.*

61 *E.I.*, Vol. V, p, 172.

62 *S.I.I.*, Vol. II, part II, No. 49.

63 In the *Śiva Purāṇa* Skanda explains the mystery of this *mantra* to the sage Vāmadeva (*Kāilāśa-saṃhitā*, chapters 8 ff). Swamimalai is also mentioned in the celebrated epic the *Silappadikāram* (canto XXIV);

See also *Tanjore District Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 221.

64 See P.V.J. Ayyar, *South Indian Shrines.*

65 See *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XXIII, pp 114-5.

66 See H.K. Sastri, *South Indian Images of Gods and Goddesses*, pp. 177 ff.

67 1.2.36.11-18 ; see also *Q.J M.S.*, Vol. I, p. 89 ; also *South Indian Serpent Lore* by R. K. Ayyar in *Q.J.M.S.*, Vol, XXII, pp. 426-7.

68 See B. Ziegenbalg, *Genealogy of the South Indian Gods*, p. 63 f.

69 E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of South India*, Vol. VII, pp. 272 ff.

70 *Tanjore Gazetteer*, Vol. 1, p. 271 and *E.R E.*, Vol. XII, p. 192 ; Fergusson, *op. cit.*, pp. 342ff ; also Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 36 f.

71 *Gazetteer of Tinnevelly District*, Vol. I, p. 407.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 380-

73 *Ibid.*, pp. 465-6.

74 *Madura District Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 288.

75 *Ibid.*, p. 314.

76 *Gazetteer of Trichinopoly District*, Vol. I, pp. 373-4.

77 *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. II, part II, p. 415 ; Cf. also T. N. Srinivasan, *A Handbook of South Indian Images*, p. 89, "every South Indian village and now every place where South Indian lives, has a shrine for this deity".

78 See M.M. Gopalaswami Mudaliar's article in *Q J.M.S.*, Vol. VI, pp. 27-32, *The Temple of Śrī Kumārasvāmī and some of its Legends.*

79 *Ibid.*, pp. 29 f. ; see also *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XXII, p. 44, "inscriptions in the building show that it was in existence as long as A.D. 950, but architecturally it is disappointing".

80 See Mudaliar, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

81 *B.G.*, XVII, part I, pp. 290 f. ; pp. 413 f.

82 See G. Oppert, *The Original Inhabitants of Bhāratavarṣa or India*, pp. 157 ff. see also A. P. Karmarkar, *The Religions of India*, Vol. I, pp. 128-35.

83 Oppert, *op. cit.*, p. 157 ; and E. Moor's *The Hindu Pantheon*, pp. 285-6.

84 See Stevenson's article *On the Modern Deities Worshipped by the Hindu in the Deccan* in *J.R.A.S.*, Vol. VII, pp. 105-12 ; also *I.A.*, Vol. X, p. 286.

85 See *B.G.*, Vol. XVIII, part III, p. 134 ; in pp. 133 ff. (*ibid*) we get a vivid description of the temple at Jejuri, see also *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XIV, p. 89.

86 See *B.G.*, Vol. XIX, pp. 529-32, also *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XIX, p. 333 ; this temple was built in the 15th Century.

87 See *Imp. Gaz.*, Vol. VII, p. 83, and Vol. VIII, p. 99.

88 See *E.R.E.*, Vol. VI, p. 701.

89 See *A.S.I.A.R.*, 1925-6, p. 192.

90 See Crooke, *op. cit.*, p. 701.

91 *Q.J.M.S.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 200.

92 See *Travancore Archaeological Series*, Vol. VI, part I, pp. 35-8.
93 *Ceylon Antiquary*, Vol. *I*, pp. 80-1.
94 *Travancore Archaeological Series*, Vol. VII, pp. 97-99-
95 See *ibid.*, No. *I*, p. 45.
96 See *E.R.E.*, Vol. XII, p. 600, also *I.A.* (1910), pp. 310-11.
97 I. II. 44 and 138.
98 *The Ocean of Story* (Tawney), Vol. I, p. 18.
99 The author Somadeva was a Kashmirian poet and wrote his monumental work between 1063 and 1081 A.D.; see Keith's *H.S.L.*, p. 281.
100 Probably composed towards the end of the 8th cent. A.D. ; Hazra, *Studies in the Upa-Purāṇas*. Vol. II, p. 395.
101 42.3.
102 *Kūrma*, II.36.19-20. This Purāṇa, according to Dr. Hazra, was composed between 550 and 800 A.D., ; see *Studies in the Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, p. 71.
103 *II*.5.9.8.

CHAPTER FIVE

Places Sacred to Kārttikeya in Ancient India

Several places of ancient India were connected with the worship of Skanda-Kārttikeya. The earliest reference to a place sacred to this god is that found in the *Sabhāparvan* of the Great Epic *viz.* Rohītaka[1]. This place is described there as *Kārttikeyasya dayitam*[2]. It is further described as delightful and prosperous and full of every kind of wealth and produce. It is not clear from this reference whether Rohītaka was the name of a city or country. P. C. Roy in his translation[3], however, renders it as 'country'. Here Nakula, one of the younger brothers of Yudhiṣṭhira, defeated the valiant Matta-mayūrakas. These Mattamayūrakas are generally identified with the Yaudheyas, first mentioned by Pāṇini in his *Aṣṭādhyāyī* ; they are also mentioned in other places of the Great Epic[4]. Rohītaka, according to most scholars, is the modern Rohtak situated in the district of the same name in the present Haryana state. As we have already seen, a number of Yaudheya coins have been discovered from this place. Yaudheya coins, as we have noticed above, certainly connect them with the god Skanda-Kārttikeya, who was regarded by them as a tutelary deity. In chapter 254 of the *Vanaparvan* the term 'Rohītaka' designates a people; they are mentioned along with the Bhadras, Āgneyas and Mālvas and are represented as being defeated by Karṇa during his *digvijaya* ; obviously Rohītaka, referred to here, means the inhabitants of the great Rohītaka city.[5] Rohītaka is not mentioned in any of the known Purāṇas ; but that this place was sacred to Skanda-Kārttikeya is also proved by a Sanskrit work of the early Christian period. In verse twenty-one of the Buddhist-Sanskrit text *Mahāmāyūrī*, as we have noted in a previous chapter, reference is made to Rohītaka as a place sacred to Skanda-Kumāra.

The Great Epic discloses the name of another very important place which was sacred to Skanda-Kārttikeya in ancient

India. In ihe 83rd chapter of the *Vanaparvan* a number of *ślokas* are devoted to the description of the great *tīrtha* of Pṛthūdaka near Kurukṣetra. This *tīrtha* is expressly described as sacred to the god Kārttikeya—

Tato gaccheta rājendra tīrthaṃ trailokyaviśrutam ।
Pṛthūdakamiti khyātaṃ Kārttikeyasya vai nṛpa[6] ॥

In the next few *ślokas* the poet pays a glowing tribute to the unique importance of this place (verses 142-9). It is described there as the most important of all the *tīrthas* (*uttamaṃ sarva-tīrthānāṃ*), more important and sacred than either Sarasvatī or any other *tīrtha* (*Prthūdakāt tīrthatamaṃ nānyat tīrthaṃ*)[7]. The testimony of the Great Epic is corroborated by the evidence of the *Padma Purāṇa*. In chapter 13 of the *Svarga-khaṇḍa* of this Purāṇa we get almost a similar account of this great *tīrtha*. Some of the verses of the Great Epic are also found in this Purāṇa.[8] Here too, the poet speaks of Pṛthūdaka as sacred to the god Kārttikeya. Some of the verses of the Great Epic eulogising Pṛthūdaka have been quoted by Lakṣmīdhara (early 12th century A.D.) in his *Tīrthakalpataru*.[9] Rājaśekhara's *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, as we know, refers to this place as the boundary between Northern and Central India (*Pṛthūdakāt parata Uttarāpathaḥ*).[10] This place has been identified by Cunningham with Pehoa, on the south bank of the Sarasvatī.[11] In the 50th chapter of the *Vāmana Purāṇa*, however, Pṛthūdaka is described as a *tīrtha* sacred to Mahādeva. This shows that in later times Kārttikeya was supplanted here by his more illustrious father.

In chapter 34 of the *Śalyaparvan* of the Great Epic we are told of a certain Somatīrtha situated on the Sarasvatī as sacred to the god Skanda. Elsewhere mention is made of another *tīrtha*, sacred to Kārttikeya, called Koṭitīrtha on the Gomatī near Banaras :—

Koṭitīrthe naraḥ snātvā arcayitvā Guhaṃ nṛpa ।
gosahasraphalaṃ vidyāt tejasvī ca bhavennaraḥ ॥[12]

The Purāṇas disclose the existence of a large number of *tīrthas* sacred to Kārttikeya situated mostly in various places

of Northern India. Two such *tīrthas* are mentioned in the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, which is universally regarded as one of the oldest Purāṇas. In chapter 30 mention is made of Guha-tīrtha on the Sarasvatī.[13] We do not know whether this *tīrtha* is the same as Pṛthūdaka which is situated on the bank of the same river. The same *tīrtha* is also referred to in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*,[14] which too, is regarded as one of the older Purānas. The *Vāyu Purāṇa* also mentions a *tīrtha* called Kārttikeya-padam at Gayā.[15] Apparently, as the name indicates, this *tīrtha* was sacred to the War-god.

In the *Matsya Purāṇa*[16] mention is made of a certain Skandatīrtha on the river Narmadā. That this particular *tīrtha* was a very well-known place is apparent from the fact that it is also referred to in the *Kūrma Purāṇa*[17] and also in the *Svargakhaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa*.[18] This *tīrtha* may be identical with the *Kumāreśvaratīrtha* on the Narmadā mentioned in the *Revākhaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāṇa*.

The *Agni Purāṇa*[19] discloses the existence of a *tīrtha* called Kākaśilā at Gayā as sacred to Kārttikeya. We propose to identify it with Kārttikeya-padam mentioned in the *Vāyu Purāṇa*.

The *Kūrma Purāṇa* refers to one Svāmitīrtha between the rivers Kāverī and Tāmraparṇī (see *supra*). Apparently, this *tīrtha* was situated in the Far South. It should be identified with one of the *tīrthas* mentioned in the *Tirumurugattru-padai*.

The *Matsya* also refers to Kārttikeya-tīrtha sacred to Yaśaskārī.[20]. We cannot be sure about the exact location of this place. However, there is reason to believe that this *tīrtha* may be the same as modern Baijnath in the Almora district of U. P. referred to as Kārttikeyapura in inscriptions and Kārttikeya-nagara by Rājaśekhara.[21] The *Brahma Purāṇa* speaks of one Kārttikeya-tīrtha on the river Gautamī (i.e. Godāvarī).[22] In the *Padma Parāṇa*[23] mention is made of one Koṭitīrtha (on Gomatī), and not far from Banaras, as sacred to Skanda. The same Purāṇa[24] refers to another *tīrtha*, sacred to Karttikeya, on the river Sarasvatī, called Ṛṣabhadvīpa.

The *Vāmana*[25] speaks of one Ojasatīrtha sacred to Kārttikeya near the Sarasvatī; the *Varāha* refers to Kārttikeya-kuṇḍa in the Himalayas.[26] The *Saura Purāṇa*[27] mentions Śakibheda in Ujjayinī as sacred to Kārttikeya.

Puṇḍravardhana as a *tīrtha*, sacred to Kārttikeya, is only mentioned in the *Garuḍa Purāṇa*.[28] This place has tentatively been identified with Skanda-nagara mentioned in the *Rāmacarita* of Sandhyākara Nandin. As noted elsewhere, Kalhaṇa[29] refers to the famous temple of Kārttikeya near Puṇḍravardhana. The *Narasiṃha Purāṇa*[30] mentions one Kumāratīrtha.

A number of places, sacred to Kārttikeya, have been referred to in the voluminous *Skanda Purāṇa*. We have already mentioned Kumāreśvaratīrtha on the Narmadā mentioned in the *Revākhaṇḍa* of this Purāṇa. There is a reference to another Kumāreśvaratīrtha in the *Prabhāsakhaṇḍa* of this Purāṇa.[31] This place was situated in Saurāṣṭra (modern Gujrat). In the *Kāśikhaṇḍa*[32] of this Purāṇa mention is made of Skandeśvara, Naigameyeśvara and Viśākheśvara *tīrthas* at Banaras.

In the *Nāgarakhaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāṇa* there is a detailed description of an ancient city called Camatkārapura in the country of Ānartta.[33] We are told in the 71st chapter of this Book of the *Skanda Purāṇa* that this place was renamed as Skandapura afterwards. In no other Purāṇa, however, do we get any reference to this town.

The *Meghadūta*[34] of Kālidāsa describes the celebrated *tīrtha* of Devagiri sacred to the god Skanda-Kārttikeya. The relevant *śloka* is here quoted :—

Atra Skandaṃ niyata-vasatiṃ puṣpameghī-kṛtātmā puṣpasāraiḥ
snapayatu bhavān vyoma-gaṅgā-jalādraiḥ ।
rakṣā-hetornavaśaśibhṛtā Vāsavīnāṃ camūnāmatyādityaṃ Huta-
vahamukhe sambhṛtaṃ taddhi tejaḥ ॥

The writer in *A.R.A.S.I.* (1925-26,[35] suggests the identification of this place with the hill Deva Dungri situated between the rivers Gambhirā and Chambal. It has also been suggested that the present temple of Dharmarāja, on the southern

summit of the hill, marks the site of the old temple of Skanda mentioned by Kālidāsa. The writer, however, concedes, "it is not clear, why such an insignificant hillock should have struck the fancy of the poet and it can only be explained by assuming that the old temple of Skanda was a famous place for worship in this locality in Kālidāsa's days". The original temple has, of course. disappeared completely.

We have already referred to the South Indian *tīrthas* sacred to Kārttikeya-Subrahmaṇya. Several other places in India were also associated with his name. Some of these places are referred to in inscriptions and other works. Kandakur in the Nellore district was formerly known as Skandapura.[36] Another Skandapura is referred to in the *Kongudesa-Rajakal*, a Tamil Chronicle, as the capital of the Western Gaṅgas ; this Skandapura according to Lassen is the present Gajjalhati on the old Ghat Road from Mysore to Trichinopoly.[37] Fleet has, however, refused to accept the authenticity of the statement of the above-mentioned Tamil work.[38] In later mediaeval times there was a Kārttikeya-tīrtha at Gaṅgāsāgara.[39] Bhavadeva Nyāyalaṅkāra (in Śaka 1651 i.e. 1729 A.D.), in his *Tīrthasāra*, has referred to the sacred image of Kārttikeya at this place.[40]

NOTES

1 32.5 ; the term *Rohitakakula* is found in the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, XIV. 3, 12 and XV.11.6 (see *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 228).
2 *Loc. cit.*
3 See Vol. II, p. 76.
4 VII.159.5—*Yaudheyān Adrijān rājan Madrakān Mālavān api* ; see also I.95.76 ; see also N. L. Dey, *Geographical Dictionary* etc., p. 78.
5 The chapter on Karṇa's *digvijaya* which mentions Rohītaka is absent in the Critical edition published by the *B.O.R.I.*, where it appears in the 'Appendix'.
6 *Mbh.*, III.83.141.
7 III.83.148 ; cf. also the verse :—

Puṇyamāhuḥ Kurukṣetraṃ Kurukṣetrāt Sarasvatī I
Sarasvatyāśca tīrthāni tīrthebhyaśca Pṛthūdakam II (83.145).

8 32-39 (Venkaṭeśvara, 27.32-9).
9 Published in G.O.S., pp, 180-1 (this book forms the 8th part of his great *Kṛtyakalpataru*).
10 P. 83.
11 *A.G.I.*, p. 385 ; the place derived its name from the king Pṛthu ; see Hall's edition of Wilson's translation of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, I 183.
12 III 84 68 ; this *tīrtha* is also mentioned in the *Svargakhaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa*.
13 Verse No. 315.
14 V. 33.26.
15 109.19 ; 111.54.
16 191.50-1 :—

Skandatīrthaṃ tato gacchet sarvapāpapraṇāśaṇam I
tat tīrthaṃ trividhaṃ pāpaṃ snānamātradvyapohati II

17 II.41.31.
18 18.51.
19 116.23.
20 13.45.
21 *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* (G.O.S.), p. 47.
22 81. 1 ; also *Garuḍa*, I.81.9.
23 *Svargakhaṇḍa*, chapter 16 ; this place, as we have previously noticed, is referred to in the *Mbh.*, III.84.68.
24 *Svarga*, 19.71.
25 41.6-7.
26 151.61-62 :—

Kārttikeyasya kuṇḍeti guhyaṃ kṣetraṃ paraṃ mama I
yatra pañcadaśa dhārāḥ patanti Himaparvatāt II
Kumāraṃ paśyati vyaktaṃ Ṣaṇmukhaṃ śubhadarśanam I
tatra snāhaṃ prakurvīta ṣaṣṭhakāloṣito naraḥ II

27 67.10.
28 I.81.16.
29 IV. 422.
30 65.17.
31 *Skanda*, VII. *Prabhāsakṣetramāhātmya*. 215.2.
32 *Uttarārdha*, chapter, 97.26-7 ; see also the *Tirthakalpataru* of Lakṣmīdhara (G. O. S.), p. 68.
33 71.38 ; we are told that Skandapura is situated near Ekaliṅgatīrtha which is in the country of Ānartta. This country is mentioned in Rudradāman's Junagaḍh inscription (*E. I.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 36 ff.) ; see B. C. Law's *Indological Studies*, part I, pp. 52-3 ; also Lüders' List No. 965.
34 *Pūrvamegha*, 47.
35 *A.R.A.S.I.* (1925-26), p. 192.
36 See *I.A.*, 1909, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 89.
37 See Rice, *Mysore and Coorg Inscriptions*, p. 1.
38 *E. I.*, Vol. III, pp. 170-1.
39 See D. C. Sircar, *Geography of Ancient and Mediaeval India*, p. 181 and fn.
40 *I.H.Q.*, Vol. XXII, p. 128.
Most of the *tirthas* mentioned by us are absent in MM. Kane's *List of tīrthas* included in Vol. IV, pp. 730-825 of his celebtated *History of Dharmaśāstra*.

CHAPTER SIX

Different Names of Skanda-Kārttikeya

Before the end of the Gupta period some of the popular names of the War-god became current. Among his more popular names may be mentioned Kumāra, Skanda, Kārttikeya, Viśākha, Śākha, Naigameya, Guha, Subrahmaṇya and Mahāsena. Here we will pursue briefly the history of these different names.

The name 'Kumāra' is mentioned in the *Rv.* (X.135). This word is generally interpreted as 'boy'; Dr. S. Sen[1] believes that this Kumāra may be "the proto-type of the post-Vedic Kumāra"; yet it would be risky to be dogmatic on this point. As has already been pointed out, the name Kumāra appears in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.[2] In this passage Kumāra is called the 9th form of Agni or Rudra. There cannot be any inkling of doubt that this Kumāra is identical with the god Kumāra-Karttikeya. In the M.S.[3] Kumāra is mentioned in the form of *Gāyatrī* along with Kārttikeya and Skanda. In the *Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra*[4] Kumāra is represented as a demon harassing infants.

It occurs frequently in the epics as one of the names of Kārttikeya. The first epigraphic reference to this name is found in the Nānāghāt inscription[5] which on palaeographic grounds has been assigned to the first century B.C. A temple of Kumāra is mentioned in the third-century A.D. inscription of Kadambeśvaradāsa found at Abbotabad[6], at present in West Pakistan. Mention may also be made in this connection to the expression *Kumāravara* found in a second-century A.D. inscription near Kanpur.[7] The name has been variously interpreted in the Purāṇas as meaning a 'boy' or a 'bachelor'.

Skanda :—This is one of the most common names of the Indian War-god and also one of the earliest. We have already noticed that this name is first found in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*[8] where we read *sa Skandaḥ Sanatkumāraḥ*. In the M.S[9]

too, mention is made of this name and he is invoked along with Kārttikeya and Kumāra This name is also found in such early works like the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali (*circa* 2nd century B C.) and *Āyāraṅga Sutta* (2nd century B.C.). In the *Hiraṇyakeśin Gṛhya Sūtra*[10] Skanda appears along with Viṣṇu and Rudra. This work should be placed between 500 B.C. and 200 B.C. In one of the second-century B. C. Brāhmī inscriptions we get the name Skandavarṇa.[11]

Different explanations of this name are offered in different places of the Great Epic and the Purāṇas. In chapter 224 of the *Vanaparvan* we are told, "and from the fact of its being regarded by the *Ṛṣis* as cast off, the child born thereof came to be called by the name of Skanda".[12] The *Anuśāsana* (chapter 85) explains the term in a different way, "as he was cast off from the womb of Gaṅgā he came to be called Skanda". The same explanation is repeated in chapter 86 of the same *parvan*. In chapter 72 of the *Vāyu Purāṇa* we get another explanation which is more interesting. We are told that Kārttikeya was called Skanda because the hostile *dānavas* were afflicted with sorrow (*skandita*) when he was born. As previously noticed, the name is also mentioned in the *Lalita-vistara*.

Viśākha :—Obviously the name is connected with Viśākhā *nakṣatra*. Viśākha is mentioned separately by Patañjali in his *Mahābhāṣya*. There is reason to believe that originally he was regarded as a separate god and only in course of time he came to be identified with the War-god. It should be remembered that both the names Viśākha and Kārttikeya are philogically connected with the stars Viśākhā and Kṛttikā. "It seems that the star-worship was mixed up with the Skanda-worship".[13] In the well-known Puranic passage, quoted before, Viśākha is described as the brother of Skanda (*pṛṣṭhaja*). His name is included in the list of Skanda's names in the *Mahābhārata*, III.231. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* I.22.9 Skanda and Viśākha are represented as two sons of Agni. The name Viśākha is found in the third-century inscriptions of Sāñchi.[14] Viśākha in all these inscriptions is mentioned as the name of a monk. It shows thst the name

Viśākha was popular in those days. Many years ago a toy-wheel was discovered from a depth of 14 feet at Patna (Kadamkuan). It is now preserved in the Patna museum (No. 109) and has an inscription in the oldest Aśokan letters giving the name of the owner as 'Viśākha' (*Visākhasa*).[15]

According to a *Vanaparvan* passage Viśākha came out from the right side of Skanda when it was struck by Śakra's thunderbolt. He is there described as "a youth with a club in hand and adorned with a celestial amulet". In chapter 227 of the same *parvan* Viśākha is described as the father of those Kumāras who harass the new-born babies. It can be safely conjectured that he was originally a malignant local deity and in later times he came to be regarded as another aspect of Skanda who was really a "composite deity". In the *Vāyu*[16] Viśākha is mentioned as the name of a mountain in the South of Mānasa. Elsewhere in the same Purāṇa[17] there is a reference to a temple of Guha in the Viśākha mountain. According to the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*[18] from Viśākha originated Sūrya.

Śākha :—Like Viśākha he too, appears as one of the brothers of Kārttikeya in the Purāṇas and the Great Epic. His name, however, is absent both in the *Vanaparvan* list of Skanda's names and the exhaustive list found in the *Skanda Purāṇa*.

Naigameya :—In the Great Epic and the early Purāṇas Naigameya is represented as the brother (*pṛṣṭhaja*) of Skanda.[19] The goat-headed *Nemeso* found in a first-century Mathurā relief, as has already been pointed out, is no other than the epic Naigameya.[20] The god has been further identified with the Vedic Nejameṣa, Naigameṣa of the early medical works and Hariṇagameśi of the Jaina Sūtras.[21] He is expressly called *ajānana* in the *Mahābhārata*.[22] The Jaina Hariṇgameśi too, is goat-faced. According to the Great Epic [23] Skanda by his *yoga* power assumed at the same time four different forms *viz.* those of Śākha, Viśākha and Naigameya besides his own. The goat-headed attendant of Skanda in the sixth-century Ellora[24] cave is no other than this deity who is but another aspect of the god Skanda.

Elsewhere we have described the character of this particular god. It should also be remembered in this connection that the Jaina Hariṇagameśi is described like Skanda as 'divine commander of the infantry'. He is directed by Indra to transfer Mahāvīra from the body of Devanandā to Triśalā. This story is aiso supported by early Jaina sculptures.

Mahāsena :—As has already been noticed, this name occurs in the later Vedic works like the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*[25] and the *Baudhāyana Dharma Śāstra*.[26] According to the *Milindapañha*[27] passage, noticed earlier, the god Mahāsena was born as Nāgasena at the request of Sakka (Indra). He is described there as a 'most wise' god. The powerful adversary of kings Bimbisāra and Udayana was Caṇḍa Pradyota of Avanti who bore the surname 'Mahāsena'. So historically the name is as old as the sixth century B.C. We, however, do not know whether he had anything to do with the god Mahāsena. From the Purāṇas was learn, "he will indeed have the neighbouring kings subject to him" (*sa vai pranata-sāmantaḥ*).[28] Buddhist works too, speak of his great power. So the name Mahāsena was not unjustly given to him. He was indeed as powerful as the god Mahāsena. In Bhāsa's drama the *Pratijñā-Yaugandharāyaṇa* he indeed boasts, '*Adyāsmi Mahāsenaḥ*'. As is well-known, the name Mahāsena is found on Huviṣka's coins along with Skanda, Viśākha and Kumāra. On some coins of that king he appears alone. Cāṃtamūla, the Ikṣvāku king of the third century A.D., was a votary of this god.[29] The popularity of this particular name of Skanda is also proved by the Bilsad pillar inscription of Kumāra Gupta I where we have reference to a shrine of Svāmin Mahāsena.

Subrahmaṇya :—It is the popular name of Kārttikeya in South India. The name is, of course, unknown now in Northern india. The term 'Subrahmaṇya' is, however, not absent in the Northern literature. Subrahmaṇya is mentioned for the first time in the *Baudhāyana Dharma Śāstra*[30] which is certainly a pre-Christian work. There cannot be any doubt, therefore, that this name, although now popular in South India, is of North Indian origin. The name is not found in

either of the epics and the earlier Purāṇas ; but the epithet *Brahmaṇya* is applied to Kārttikeya more than once in the Great Epic. From Brahmaṇya to Subrahmaṇya is but a short step. The name Brahmaṇyadeva is present in the early inscriptions and coins (*cf.* the coins of the Yaudheyas and the Bilsad inscription of Kumāra Gupta I). In the *Śiva Purāṇa*[31] this name is found several times. It is interesting to note that the name Subrahmaṇya is entirely absent in the early Tamil literature of the Śangam period and the inscriptions of the Ikṣvākus, Kadambas Nalas, Cālukyas and other early dynasties of South India.

Guha :—This is another important name of the War-god mentioned several times in the Great Epic and other early Purāṇas. According to the *Anuśāsanaparvan*[32] he was called Guha because he had lived quite a long time in a cave (*guhā*). Some of the earlier Purāṇas like the *Vāyu* and *Brahmāṇḍa* often call Skanda by this name. The name is, however, not found in early inscriptions and coins.

Kārttikeya :—This is the most common name of the War-god. We have already seen that the name is found in a passage of the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā*. It may, of course, be argued that this passage is a later intrusion and this particular name was not known to the authors of latest Vedic works. This name is not mentioned in that particular passage of the *Baudhāyana Dharma Śāstra* (2.5.9.8) where almost all the popular names of the War-god are mentioned *viz.* Skanda, Ṣaṇmukha, Viśākha, Mahāsena and even Subrahmaṇya. In the epics and the Purāṇas, however, this name appears several times. Obviously the name is derived from Kṛttikā. We are told in the *Anuśāsanaparvan* that as Skanda had sucked the breasts of the six Kṛttikās, he came to be known as Kārttikeya.[33] It is interesting to note that the name is not found on the coins of Huviṣka and the Yaudheyas. The image of Kārttikeya is mentioned in a first-century inscription found from Mathurā (see also *infra*, ch. VIII).

There is little doubt that all the above-mentioned names of Kārttikeya were known before the beginning of the Christian era. The passage of the *Baudhāyana Dharma*

Śāstra[34] which gives most of the popular names of Skanda-Kārttikeya is certainly as old as 200 B.C. A much fuller list of Kārttikeya's names is found in the *Vanaparvan*[35], which is also probably pre-Christian. The list has as many as 51 names. We are reproducing below the complete list :—
1. Āgneya 2. Skanda 3. Dīptakīrti 4. Anāmaya 5. Mayūraketu 6. Dharmātman 7. Bhūteśa 8. Mahiṣārdana 9. Kāmajit 10. Kāmada 11. Kānta 12. Satyavāc 13. Bhuvaneśvara 14 Śiśu 15. Śīghra 16. Śuci 17. Caṇḍa 18. Dīptavarṇa 19. Śubhānana 20. Amogha 21. Anāgha 22. Raudra 23. Priya 24. Candrānana 25. Dīptaśakti 26. Praśāntātman 27. Bhadrakṛt 28 Kūṭamohana 29. Ṣaṣṭhīpriya 35. Revatīsuta 36. Prabhu 37. Netṛ 38. Viśākha 39. Naigameya 40 Suduścara 41. Suvrata 42. Lalita 43. Bālakrīḍanakapriya 44. Khacārin 45. Brahmacārin 46. Śūra 47. Śaravaṇodbhava 48. Viśvāmitrapriya 49. Devasenāpriya 50. Vāsudevapriya 51. Priyakṛt.

There is more exhaustive list of Kārttikeya's names in the *Skanda Purāṇa*, I. 2. 29[36] ; but what is more interesting is that the latter list has almost nothing to do with the former. The *Skanda Purāṇa* list of Kārttikeya's names is reproduced below :—

1. Mālin 2. Maulin 3. Patākin 4. Jaṭin 5. Muṇḍin 6. Śikhaṇḍin 7. Kuṇḍalin 8. Lāṅgalin 9. Bāla 10. Kumāra 11. Pravara 12. Vara 13. Dvādaśa 14. Bhū 15. Bhuva 16. Bhāvi . 17. Bhuvaḥ putra 18. Namaskṛta 19. Nāgaraja 20. Sudharmātman 21. Nākapṛṣṭha 22. Sanātana 23. Bhartṛ 24. Sarvabhūtātman 25. Trātṛ 26. Sukhāvaha 27. Śaradakṣa 28. Śikhin 29. Jetṛ 30. Ṣaḍānana 31. Bhayanāśana 32. Hemagarbha 33. Mahāgarbha 34. Jaya 35. Vijayeśvara 36. Kartṛ 37. Vidhātṛ 38. Nitya 39. Nityārimardana 40. Mahāsena 41. Mahātejas 42. Vīrasena 43. Bhūpati 44. Siddhāsana 45. Surādhyakṣa 46. Bhīmasena 47, Nirāmaya 48. Śauri 49. Yadu 50. Vīryavat 51. Satyavikrama 52. Tejagarbha 53. Asuraripu 54. Suramūrti 55. Surorjita 56. Kṛtajña 57. Varada 58. Satya 59. Śaraṇya 60. Sādhuvatsala 61. Suvrata 62 Sūryasaṅkāśa 63. Vahnigarbha 64. Kaṇa 65. Bhuva 66. Pippalī 67. Śīghraga 68. Raudri 69. Gāṅgeya 70. Ripudāraṇa 71. Kārttikeya 72. Prabhu 73. Kṣantā 74. Nīladaṃṣṭra 75. Mahāmanas 76. Nigraha

77. Netṛ 78. Suranandana 79. Pragraha 80. Paramānanda 81. Krodhghna 82. Tāra 83. Ucchrita 84. Kukkuṭin 85. Bahulī 86. Divya 87. Kāmada 88. Bhūrivardhana 89. Amogha 90. Amṛtada 91. Agni 92. Śatrughna 93. Sarvamodana 94. Avyaya 95. Amara 96. Śrīmat 97. Unnata 98. Agni-sambhava 99. Piśācarāja 100. Sūryābha 101. Śivātman 102. Śivanandana 103. Aparāpara 104. Durjñeya 105. Sarva-bhūta-hite-rata 106. Agrāhya 107. Kāraṇa 108. Parameṣṭhin 109. Acintya 110. Sarvātman.

The two lists, reproduced above, have little that is ccmmon between them. The *Vanaparvan* list excludes such important names as Kārttikeya and Mahāsena, while the more elaborate *Skanda Purāṇa* list omits such names as Naigameya, Skanda and Viśākha. There is every reason to believe that the poet of the *Skanda Purāṇa* was not acquainted with the *Vanaparvan* list. Had it been so, he would have certainly included the names of the former list. It is also probable that some of the names of the War-god were forgotten by the time the latter list was compiled and replaced by new names The *Amara-koṣa*[37], which was probably composed before 500 A. D., mention 16 names of Skanda-Kārttikeya. The relevant passage is reproduced below :-

Kārttikeyo Mahāsenaḥ Śarajanmā Ṣaḍānanaḥ I
Pārvatīnandanaḥ Skandaḥ Senānīragnibhūr Guhaḥ II
Bāhuleyas Tārakajid Viśākhaḥ Śikhivāhanaḥ I
Ṣāṇmāturaḥ Śaktidharaḥ Kumāraḥ Krauñcadāraṇaḥ II
(*Svargavarga*, I.39-40).

Some of the names, mentioned here, are absent in the *Vanaparvan* and *Skanda Purāṇa* lists. It is also interesting to note that Subrahmaṇya, the popular South Indian name of this god, is not found in any one of these three lists.

NOTES

1 *Indo-Iranica, Vol. IV*, No. 1, p. 27.
2 V.I 13.18.
3 2.9.1.11-12.
4 See *S.B.E.*, Vol. XXIX.1.16.24.
5 *Arch. Sur. W.I.*, Vol. V, pp. 60 ff; for a discussion on the date of Nānāghāt Inscription, see *P.H.A.I.*, pp. 415 f.
6 *E.I.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 59-62.
7 See *A S.I.A.R.*, 1929-30, p. 133.
8 7.26.2
9 2.9,1.11-12.
10 2.8.19.
11 See Lüders' List No. 930 ; also *A.S.I.A.R.*, 1903-4, p. 114.
12 Tr. P. C. Roy.
13 M.N. Mukherjee in *I.H.Q.*, Vol. VII, p. 314.
14 See *E.I.*, Vol. II, pp. 112, 327, 376.
15 See *J.I.S.O A.*, Vol. III, p. 125, "Terracottas Dug Out at Patna" by K.P. Jayaswal ; also plate XXX, fig. 3.
16 36.23.
17 39.55.
18 2.24.129.
19 *Mbh.*, I.66.23-24 ; *Vāyu*, 66.24 ; *Brahmāṇḍa*, III.3.25 ; *Matsya*, 5.26 ; *Viṣṇu*, I.15.115.
20 See also Bühler, *E I*,, Vol. II, pp. 311 ff.
21 See *J. R. A. S*, 1895, pp. 149-55, the article by Winternitz, also *J U P.H.S.*, Vol. XX, pp. 69-74 'A Note on God Naigameya' by Dr. V,S. Agrawala.
22 III.225.28.
23 IX.44.36.
24 Rao, *op.cit.*, Vol- II, part II, Plate CXXIV.
25 10th *Prapāṭhaka*,
26 II.5.9.8.
27 I.16.20.
28 See *P,H.A.I.*, p. 204.
29 *E I.*, Vol. XX, pp. 6 f.
30 2.5.9.8.
31 *Kailaśa Saṃhitā*. chapters 8ff.
32 85.82 & 86 14 (*guhāvāsād Guho'bhavat*).
33 Chapter 85 ; see also *I.H.Q.*, Vol. VII, pp. 317 ff 'Some Notes on Skanda-Kārttikeya' by M. N. Mukherjee. According to the *Rāmāyaṇa* the foetus was thrown by Gaṅgā on the *Himavat*, and it was nourished by the 6 stars constituting the constellation of Kṛttikās (Pleiades) and was, therefore, called the son of Kṛttikās or Kārttikeya (*Bālakāṇḍa*, chapter 37).

34 2.5.9.8 ; Macdonell (H.S.L., pp. 218-9) places this work before 400 B.C.

35 Chapter 232.

36 *Skanda Purāṇa* (Venkaṭeśvara), I. 2. 29. 127-41.

37 See Macdonell, *op. cit.*, p. 368 ; Max Müller says in *India What It Can Teach Us* that the *Amarakoṣa* was translated into Chinese in the 6th century A. D. Oak places the *Amarakaṣa* in the 4th cent. A.D. Telang assigns it to a still earlier date ; Hoernle in *J.R.A.S.* (1906) attempts to place it between the 7th and the 10th centuries ; Keith, as usual, (*op. cit.*, p. 413) gives a much later date.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Aspects of Kārttikeya's Character

It is difficult to find a more complex deity in the Brahmanical pantheon than Skanda-Kārttikeya. His most well-known portfolio is that of the Commander-in-Chief of the celestials ; but he also appears as a *mahāyogī* and a patron of learning. He is depicted, elsewhere, as a god worshipped by the thieves and robbers and a god of amorous love, a malignant god harassing children and new-born babes. Some other outlandish traits are also found in his character. In this chapter we will endeavour to make an exhaustive survey of his various characteristics.

Skanda as a god of war—In the Upaniṣads and the Sūtra literature Skanda does not appear as a War-god, although the name Mahāsena, as has been noticed before, is not absent in the latest Vedic literature. In the Great Epic, however, he is repeatedly described as the general of the gods. In the *Ṛgveda* both Indra and Agni are pictured as warrior-gods, as the gods leading the Aryans in their wars against the Dāsas and the Dasyus. Indra's well-known epithet '*Purandara*' (destroyer of the *Puras*) can have only one meaning. Agni, the Fire-god, as we have previously remarked, was also conceived as a War-god. In the Great Epic, however, his son replaces him as the generalissimo of the gods.

From the *Vanaparvan* account it becomes clear that Skanda won this title only after humbling the pride of the mighty lord of the gods, Devarāja Indra. This event is narrated in chapter 227 of the *Vanaparvan* where Kārttikeya's war with Indra and other celestials has been vividly described. This event is also referred to in some other Purāṇas. He grew so powerful that he was requested by the *Ṛṣis* and others to become 'Indra' of the three worlds ; but as Skanda had no fancy for Indraship, he allowed Śakra to retain his title.

Kārttikeya's greatest achievement as the generalissimo of the gods was his killing of the demons Mahiṣa and Tāraka.

The killing of Mahiṣa is described in some details in the *Vanaparvan* account of Skanda's birth and exploits. This event is also referred to in the *Śalyaparvan*[1], *Viṣṇudharmottara*[2] and *Vāmana Purāṇas*[3]. In the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*[4] also Skanda is described as *Mahiṣāsuranārīṇāṃ nayanāñjana-taskaram*. Now, as we all know, the famous *Devī-Māhātmya* of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* has described in great details Durgā's war with Mahiṣa in which the latter was ultimately defeated and killed. This event is also indirectly mentioned in the *Matsya Purāṇa*.[5] The *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* also supports the account of the *Devī-Māhātmya*[6]. Some early sculptures, dating from the beginning of the Christian era, represent Durgā as destroying Mahiṣāsura.[7] The earliest representation of Mahiṣāsuramardinī, found so far, is probably a terracotta plaque from Nagar, Rajasthan,[8] which has been assigned to the first century B.C.

Notwithstanding all these evidences, there is nothing to disprove that the story of Durgā's killing of Mahiṣa was not borrowed from some earlier accounts. We have already pointed out that the *Vanaparvan* account, which narrates Skanda's war with Mahiṣa, was certainly composed before the Christian era. In the list of Skanda's names, found in the 232nd chapter of the *Vanaparvan*, we have the significant name Mahiṣārdana. It is also interesting to note that in the later accounts of Skanda's exploits, the killing of Mahiṣa is rarely referred to. There cannot be any doubt that in the later period the account of Kārttikeya's killing of Mahiṣa was nearly forgotten and replaced by the Durgā-Mahiṣāsura story ; yet the former account was not entirely thrown into oblivion as is proved by the references in the *Brahmāṇḍa*, *Viṣṇudharmottara* and *Vāmana Purāṇas*. It is reasonable, therefore, to infer that the story of Durgā's killing of Mahiṣāsura was borrowed from the source indicated above.

It should be noted in this connection that the epithet *Mahiṣāsuramardinī* is absent in the *Durgāstotra* preserved in the *Bhīṣmaparvan* (ch. 23) of the Great Epic; in the hymn sung by Yudhiṣṭhira in the *Virāṭaparvan* (ch. 6) we, however, get the title '*Mohiṣāsuranāśinī*' ; but this *stotra* is not found in

the Southern recension of the *Mahābhārata*. It is not illogical, therefore, to conclude that the Great Epic, as a whole, contains no reference to Durgā's *mahiṣāsuramardinī* aspect. As a matter of fact, as R. G. Bhandarkar points out, both the *Durgāstotras* are later intrusions into the Great Epic.[9]

The story of Kārttikeya's killing of Tāraka is, of course, much better known. The earlier *Vanaparvan* account (chs. 222-32) is expressly silent on this point. It is, however, indicated in the *Śalya* account and confirmed by the *Anuśāsana* story of Kārttikeya's birth and exploits. We wiil not be far wrong in believing that the Tāraka-episode is a later addition to the Kārttikeya-mythology. The earliest sculpture of Tārakāri Skanda cannot be dated before the sixth century A.D. (see also ch. VIII). It should also be noted that the Great Epic nowhere gives any detailed account of Skanda's war with Tāraka. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* does not mention him while the *Vāyu* refers to his name only once. It is in the somewhat later Purāṇas like the *Matsya*,[10] *Padma*,[11] *Skanda*[12] and others that we get a detailed account of Skanda's war with Tāraka. In any case, we should be prepared to believe that the Tāraka-episode is distinctly later than the Mahiṣa-episode. It must also be remembered, in this connection, that the name Tārakāri is conspicious by its absence in both the *Vanaparvan* and *Skanda Purāṇa* lists of Skanda's names.

Kārttikeya's title *Devasenāpati* has two meanings *viz.* the general of the army of celestials and the husband of Devasenā. The latter, according to the *Vanaparvan* (chapter 222), was a daughter of Prajāpati, who was rescued by Indra from the clutch of a demon named Keśin and later given in marriage to Skanda.

As a warrior-god Skanda reminds us of the Greek Ares and the Roman Mars. Yet, as Goodwin[13] points out, "there is an essential difference between the Indian conception of Skanda and that of the Classical mythology, especially in the absence of that heaviness, that brute force unrelieved by lighter and more vivacious qualities, which characterize the War-gods of the Greeks and Romans. In Mars, we expect only prodigious

strength, a mighty and crushing blow, not any exhibition of quick dexterity or mercurial cunning". The Indian War-god is not only powerful but his personal beauty is often alluded to. He rides on the peacock which is the most beautiful bird found anywhere in the world. As a War-god Skanda's most characteristic weapon is *śakti* or lance. This *śakti*, according to the *Viṣṇu*[14] and *Mārkaṇḍeya*[15], was fashioned by Viśvakarman for Skanda from the solar energy.[16]

Skanda as a god of learning and wisdom :—Kārttikeya is not only a great warrior but he is acclaimed in various places as the god of wisdom and learning. This conception is probably due to his connection with the Vedic sage Sanatkumāra. In the *Chāndogya* passage, quoted before, he is identified with that sage. This identification of Skanda with Sanatkumāra is confirmed by another passage in the 46th chapter of the *Śalyaparvan*.[17] According to both the *Vāyu*[18] and *Brahmāṇḍa*[19] Skanda and Sanatkumāra are the sons of Agniby Svāhā. In the Great Epic the title *Yogīśvara* has been conferred on him more than once[20]. He also receives the epithets *Brahmaṇya*, *Brahmeśaya* and *Brahmaniṣṭha*. We are also told that he is the foremost of those who are possessed of Brahman[21]. The Purāṇas explicitly connect him with wisdom and learning. According to the *Kūrma Purāṇa*, he is an authority on *Brahmavidyā* :—*yo'pi Brahmavidyāyāṃ śreṣṭho devasenāpatiḥ prabhuḥ*.[22] The *Milindapañha*, which was not improbably composed before the beginning of the Christian era, informs us that the god Mahāsena (i.e. Skanda-Kārttikeya) was born as Nāgasena (the *guru* of king Milinda or Menander) at the request of Sakka (i.e Indra). There he is represented as a 'most wise' god who is able to hold conversation with Milinda and to resolve his doubts[23] The evidence of this well-known non-Brahmanical work is of the highest importance. It proves that from a fairly early period there was a distinct tradition which connected Skanda-Kārttikeya with wisdom and learning. According to the *Skanda Purāṇa* even Mahādeva had to acknowledge Skanda's superiority :—*Matto'pi jñānayogena Skando'pyadhikabhāvabhṛt*.[24] The *Śiva Purāṇa* declares, *Jñānaśaktidharo vīraḥ*

sarvāsuravimardanaḥ[25]. He is extolled in the highest terms in the same Purāṇa :—

Vedāntārthasvarūpāya Vedāntārthavidhāyine ।
Vedāntārthavide nityaṃ viditāya namonamaḥ[26] ॥

Such examples can easily be multiplied. In the same *Śiva Purāṇa* Kārttikeya explains the meaning of the mysterious *praṇava mantra* to the sage Vāmadeva.[27] According to a well-known Tamil tradition Skanda taught his father Śiva the mysteries of this *mantra* at a place called Swamimalai. According to another popular tradition recorded by Rao[28] Subrahmaṇya chastised Brahman for his ignorance of the Vedas and, therefore, he came also to be known as Brahma-śāstā. The *Tirumurugattrupadai*[29] too, represents him as a god of wisdom. As a matter of fact, in South India Skanda-Subrahmaṇya is more famous as a god of wisdom than of war.

Somadeva's monumental work the *Kathāsaritsāgara* (11th century A.D.) frequently represents Kārttikeya as the Instructor-god ; one of the *ślokas* in the first Book of this work runs thus :—

Tataḥ SvāmiKumārasya pādamūlaṃ gato'bhavat ।
Tapastuṣṭena tenāsya sarvavidyāḥ prakāśitāḥ ॥[30]

We are also informed by Somadeva that Skanda taught the mysteries of grammar to *Śarvavarman*.[31]

Kumāra aspect of Skanda-Kārttikeya :—Elsewhere we have shown that the name 'Kumāra' of this god is as old as the period of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, if not of the *Ṛgveda*. The literal meaning of the term is 'bachelor' or 'boy'. Among all the gods in the Brahmanical pantheon only Skanda receives this title. In the Great Epic he is often described as an ascetic and a *Yogīśvara*. This description of Kārttikeya as *Yogīśvara* is not accidental. In the list of his names recorded in the 232nd chapter of the same epic we get such names as Dharmātman, Kāmajit, Satyavāc, Śuci, Praśāntātman, Pavitra and Brahmacārin. Such epithets or names are characteristic of a god who ia both a *yogīśvara* and a *Kumāra*. We have described him as a god of wisdom which is but

another aspect of an ascetic-god. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the grand epithet Brahmaṇyadeva applied to him in the early coins and inscriptions (cf. the coins of the Yaudheyas and the Bilsad inscription of Kumāra Gupta I). The term *Yogīśvara* is applied to him also in the Purāṇas.[32] The *Skanda Purāṇa*[33] tells us that Śaṅka and other *yogis* had assembled together to confer on Skanda the title of *Yogīśvara*. In the *Varāha Purāṇa*[34] he is equated with *Ahaṃkāra* which is termed the highest *tattva*. The *Matsya Purāṇa* explicitly calls him *Brahmacārin*.[35]

As a true *Kumāra* and ascetic Skanda-Kārttikeya is often pictured as shunning the company of women. They were not allowed to enter the shrines of Skanda. According to Kālidāsa's *Vikramorvaśīyam*[36] Skanda's place is forbidden to women (*itthiāaṇaparihāraṇīaṃ Kumāravaṇaṃ paviṭṭā*). Kālidāsa's testimony is supported by the evidence of the *Kathāsaritsāgara*.[37] In IX.5.174 of this work we read, *Viśanti śāpabhitā hi na Kumāragṛhaṃ striyaḥ*. '*Kumāragṛha*' here evidently signifies the temple of the god Kumāra or Kārttikeya. In the Candrehe inscription[38] of Prabodhaśiva of the Kalacuri era 724 (=973 A.D.) we came across the following words in the tenth verse, "like Kumāra who abjured the company of women" (*Kumāra iva sarvadā parihṛtāṅganā-saṅgamaḥ*). According to the Marathi work the *Śivalīlāmṛta*[39] a woman gets widowhood for seven successive births if she looks at the image of the god Skanda. Even at present women are not permitted to visit the famous ancient temple of Kumārasvāmin near Sandur in Mysore.[40] This is due to the fact that Skanda and his mother Gaurī were once involved in a furious quarrel. Only after this quarrel with his mother, Skanda made it a taboo for the women to visit his temple.

Skanda-Kārttikeya as a benevolent deity :—From a very early period Skanda was regarded as a deity who could grant the boon of child (particularly of male-child) to barren women. This is the Naigameya aspect of Skanda (see also *supra*, ch. VI). We have already seen that this god is no other than Nejameṣa mentioned in one of the *Khila Sūktas* of the

Ṛgveda[41] and various other *Gṛhya Sūtras*. A portion of the original *Khila*[42] is here reproduced :—

Nejameṣa parā pata suputraḥ punar ā pata ।
asyai me putrakāmāyai garbhaṃ ā dheyi yaḥ pumān ॥

"O Nejameṣa, fly away and fly hither again bringing a beautiful son ; to my wife, who is longing for a son, grant thou an embryo, and that a male one". According to the *Ṛgvidhāna*[43] both this *Khila* and the original hymn[44] should be addressed by women desirous of children.[45] As we have previously remarked, Nejameṣa is everywhere addressed in the Sūtras as a son-granting god. This leads us to the conclusion that in the later Vedic period Nejameṣa was the principal son-granting god and, therefore, immensely popular. In the early Jaina works like the *Neminātha Carita* (7th Canto)[46] and the *Kalpasūtra* the god Naigameśa or Hariṇagameśi appears both as a son-granting and an embroyo-transferring deity. The story of the *Neminātha Carita* (referred to by Bühler) states that Kṛṣṇa once invoked the aid of the god Naigameśa to obtain for his consort Satyabhāmā a child equal to Pradyumna. Kṛṣṇa's prayer was granted by the propitiated god. This Naigameśa is the same as Vedic Nejameṣa as Winternitz[47] and Bühler have shown. In the *Suśruta Saṃhitā* (a work probably of the 1st century A. D.)[48] we find Naigameṣa (same as Brahmanical Nejameṣa, Jaina Naigameśa or Hariṇagameśi and Naigameya of the Great Epic and the Purāṇas) being invoked as a protector of children :—

Ajānanaścalākṣibhrūḥ kāmarūpī mahāyaśāḥ ।
bālaṃ pālayitā devo Naigameṣobhirakṣatau ॥

"The protecting god Naigameṣa, the goat-faced with quivering eyes and brows, he who changes his form at will[49] and highly-famed, may protect the child". This goat-faced, son-protecting god (*bālaṃ pālayitā devo*) is the same as *Chāgavaktro bahuprajaḥ* Naigameya of the Great Epic,[50] who is but another aspect of Skanda-Kārttikeya, and is described as his *pṛṣṭhaja* (brother) in the *Ādiparvan* and the Purāṇas.

The Great Epic further informs us that the 'Mothers' who follow Skanda should be worshipped by those desirous of offspring.[51]

The above discussion clearly demonstrates the fact that from a fairly early period the god Nejameṣa-Naigameṣa or Naigameya was universally regarded not only as a son-granting deity but also as a guardian-protector of children. Even at the present day, in many parts of India, Kārttikeya is worshipped by barren women.

Non-Aryan traits in Skanda-Kārttikeya :—There cannot be any doubt that Skanda-Kumāra, who was originally a form of the Fire-god (or the Sun-god), was essentially an Aryan deity. Yet, like Rudra-Śiva, with whom he was associated in later times, he has outlandish qualities, which connect him with non-Aryan or un-Aryan cults. This is solely due to the fact, that in a somewhat later period, the god came to associated with some local deities and gradually absorbed same of their qualities and thereby became popular to the common mass. As a matter of fact, this is the case with all the Brahmanical gods. No Vedic god has remained unmolested so far, and Skanda's is no exception. His identification with the Tamilian deity Murugan or Seyon might have accelerated this process.

Aa previously noted, in the *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra*[52] Kumāra is represented as a demon harassing infants. In the Great Epic this non-Aryan trait is all the more evident. A number of his attendants, both male and female, are mentioned in the *Śalyaparvan* account. Reference is made in chapter 228 of the *Vanaparvan* of the Kumāras 'who continually harass infants'. We come across the term *Skandagraha* in chapter 230 of the same *parvan*[53] In the *Vāyu*[54] *Skandagrahas* are called *rākṣasas*, who are fearful to children :—

Skandagrahādayaścaiva āpakāstrāsakādayaḥ I
Kaumārāste tu vijñeyā bālānāṃ grahavṛttayaḥ. II

Chapter 230 of the *Vanaparvan* gives a detailed account of the *Skandagrahas*. It is difficult not to see in this account

a reflection of the primitive beliefs and superstitions. Skanda is also connected in this chapter with 'Mothers', who too, are regarded as fearful to children and pregnant women. Seven such 'Mothers' are mentioned in chapter 228 of the *Vanaparvan* ; they are-Kākī, Halimā, Mālinī, Bṛṃhatā, Āryā, Palālā, and Vaimitrā. At least three of these names (Kākī, Halimā and Palālā) are distinctly non-Aryan. In chapter 46 of the *Śalyaparvan* a very large number of such 'Mothers' have been mentioned, Some of the names there are also clearly non-Aryan *viz.* Eḍī, Bheḍī, Sameḍī Muṇḍī, Dhamadhamā etc. Clear is here Kārttikeya's connection with the primitive Mother-worship which goes back to the period of the Harappan civilization. In the *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya* of Vāgbhaṭṭa (Gupta work) we have reference to three important *grahas* as equally affecting children, called Skanda, Viśākha and Naigameṣa.[55] In the *Suśruta Saṃhitā*[56] mention is made of Naigameṣagraha who along with other eight evil planets cause children's diseases. He is described elsewhere in the same work[57] as a ram-faced (*meṣānana*) demon created by Pārvatī, carrying off little children, and intimate friend of Guha (i.e. Skanda).

It is highly interesting to note that in the Ikṣvāku inscriptions of the third century A.D. Mahāsena receives the epithet *Virūpākhapati.*[58] Vogel[59] takes the term Virūpākha in the sense of the hosts of which Skanda was the leader. It indicates a class of snakes in a snake-charm in the *Vinaya Piṭaka.*[60] *Virūpākṣa* as an adjective is applied to the demons in both the epics. Skanda himself has been described in some places of the Great Epic as the leader of the *rākṣasas.*[61] The testimony of the Ikṣvāku inscriptions, therefore, confirms the evidence of the Great Epic and establishes Skanda's close link with the non-Aryan worship of demons, snakes and other evil spirits.

Skanda-Kārttikeya as an amorous god :—A curious aspect of Kārtttkeya's character, not found in majority of the Purāṇas, is referred to in the *Brahma Purāṇa* and confirmed by a single line of the *Skanda Purāṇa.* We have noted that in the epics and the Purāṇas Skanda is eulogised as a *Kumāra* and

mahāyogī. His character is extolled in the highest terms, *Svayaṃ Skando mahādevaḥ sarvapāpapraṇāśanaḥ*[62] ; such a god appears as an erotic, amorous, pleasure-seeking and irresponsible youth in chapter 81 of the *Brahma Purāṇa*[63] The god is there seen dallying with the wives of other gods. Obviously he is making the fullest exploitation of his physical appearance. The gods complain to his mother Pārvatī who tries to dissuade her son from such a life, but the son turns a deaf ear to her request. Thereupon, the mother plays her last trump card. Wherever Skanda goes, he finds his mother. This incident induces him to turn into an ascetic. Confirmation of this story is found in a single line of the *Skanda Purāṇa*.[64]

This particular aspect of Skanda-Kārttikeya's character is, however, not found in the epics and the earlier Purāṇas. As the field of conjecture is open, we may suggest that the story is influenced by the Tamil conception of the god Murugan, who not infrequently appears as god, par excellence, of love and revelry. This probably explains why, at the present day in Bengal and elsewhere, Kārttikeya is worshipped by women of doubtful repute.

Skanda-Kārttikeya as a patron of thieves and bandits :— The well-known *Mṛcchakaṭika* passage, referred to in a previous chapter, distinctly pictures Skanda as a patron-deity of thieves. From the passage it also becomes clear that a sage named Kanakahastin was regarded as the *guru* of thieves and robbers. This sage was looked upon as an incarnation of Skanda[65] and, therefore, specially venerated by the thieves and robbers. In the *Skandayāga*, Skanda is expressly called *Dhūrta*. This poem is otherwise known as *Dhūrtakalpa*.[66] The term *Dhūrta* is highly suggestive. It shows that Kārttikeya was regarded as a god of knavery. Goodwin, the first editor of the text,[67] compares him with the Greek god Hermes, who too, is depicted as a 'Master-thief'.[68] He further observes, "the conception of Skanda as a god of knavery..... is certainly not alien to the character of the moral notions of the Hindu".

The celebrated Sanskrit work *Kathāsaritsāgara* too, confirms the evidence of the *Mṛcchakaṭika* and *Skandayāga*.

In XVII. 1.115 of this work[69] Kārttikeya (referred to here as Senānī) appears as a god of bandits. There was, therefore, a clear tradition in ancient India which connected Skanda-Kārttikeya with thieves and robbers. It is also highly interesting to note that in South India Subrahmaṇya is adored by such tribes as Kaḷḷars and Marabas, who belong to be robber caste.[70] In the Deccan the god Khaṇḍobā, who is regarded as an aspect of Kārttikeya, is worshipped by a tribe called Ramoshis[71] who live by stealing.[72]

NOTES

1 Chapter 46 ; in some other places of the Great Epic also Skanda has been pictured as the destroyer of the demon Mahiṣa, cf. VIII.5.56 :—

Yathā Skandena Mahiṣo yathā Rudreṇa cāndhakaḥ ।
tathārjunena sa hato dvairathe yuddhadurmadaḥ ॥

See also *Mbh.*, VII.166.16—*nihaniṣyāmi Mahiṣaṃ Ṣaṇmukho yathā* ॥

2 I.233.7—*Jaghāna Mahiṣaṃ nāma dānavaṃ devakaṇṭakam* ॥

3 Chapter 58.

4 II.25.16.

5 152.17, 24.

6 IV.29.75 & 88.

7 Cf. 'Mahiṣāsuramardinī Sculptures from Besnagar', (*P.I.H.C.*, XI, 1948, pp. 96-100, the article by D. R. Patil). See also the article 'Antiquity of the Image of Mahiṣāsuramardinī', (*I.H.Q.*, Vol. XXII, pp. 154 f.) by Diskalkar, where the author argues that the earliest Mahiṣāsuramardinī images go back to the 1st cent. A.D.

8 See *Lalita-kalā*, Nos. 1-2, pp. 72-4 ; also *The Adyar Library Bulletin* (N.S.), Vol. XIX. pp. 37 ff.

9 See *Collected Works of Sir R.G. Bhandarkar*, Vol. IV, p. 203.

10 Chs. 159 f.

11 *Sṛṣṭi*, 44.121-218.

12 In several places of this Purāṇa Skanda has been depicted as the killer of the demon Tāraka.

13 *Proceedings of the American Oriental Society*, 1890 (pp V-XIII) included in *J.A.O.S.*, Vol. XV.

14 *Viṣṇu*, III.2.12.

15 *Mārkaṇḍeya*, 105.4.

16 See Rao, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, part II, p. 431.

17 Verse No. 98.

18 66.23.

19 III.3.24-5.

20 See *Śalya*, 44.16 (here he is described as a *mahayogabalānvitaḥ*) and *ibid.*, 46.96.

21 See *Vanaparvan*, chapter 232.

22 II.6.29.

23 *S B.E.*, Vol. XXXV, I.16-20.

24 *Nāgara*, 264.38.

25 *Kailāśasaṃhitā*, 11.16.

26 *Ibid.*, 11.23.

27 *Ibid.*, chapters, 11 ff.

28 *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, part II, p. 439.

29 See Chelliah's translation, line 377.

30 I.2.60 ; see also I.6.152 ; I.6.159, 163, 167 ; I.2.77 & 83.

31 1.7.9.

32 Cf. *Skanda Purāṇa*, I.2.31.47. He is called *Yoginām guru* in the same Purāṇa (1.2.32.71) ; see also *Siva* II.4.20 ; the *Vāmana Purāṇa* gives him the title *Mahāyogī* (57.46).

33 I.2,29.215-16.

34 Chapter 25.

35 185.3.

36 See Act IV.

37 See also Tawney's translation, Vol. IV, p. 214.

38 *E. I.*, Vol. XXI, p. 150.

39 See *Pracīna Caritra Kośa* in Hindi, based on the Marathi work of MM. Siddheśvara Sāstrī Chitrao, p. 1011 ; also *Bhāratīya Saṃskrti Kośa* in Marathi, Vol. II, p. 278.

40 See *Q.J.M.S.*, Vol. VI, pp. 27-32.

41 See Max Müller, Vol. IV, p. 540.

42 Quoted by Winternitz in *J.R.A.S.*, 1895, p. 150.

43 IV.23-Dr. Meyer's edition.

44 *Rv.*, X.184.

45 *Puṣpaṃ dṛṣṭvā tu yā garbhaṃ na gṛhṇīyād vayonvitā* I
'*Viṣṇor yoniṃ*' '*Nejameṣa*' *yoniṃ spṛṣṭvā tato japet* II

46 See *E.I.*, Vol. II, pp. 314 f.

47 *J.R.A.S.*, 1895, pp. 150 f.

48 *Uttaratantra*, 36.9 (quoted by Winternitz).

49 The Jaina god Hariṇagameśi, as Winternitz remarks, has the power of transforming himself, see also *S B.E* , XXII, p. 228.

50 III.225.28.

51 III.230.15 f.

52 1.16.24.

53 See also *Brahmāṇḍa*, III.7.159-60.

54 69.191.

55 *Uttarasthāna*, chapter 3 ; we are indebted to the article of Dr. V. S. Agrawala in *J U.P.H.S.*, Vol XX, pp. 69-74 for this information.

56 *Uttaratantra*, chapter 27.

57 *Ibid.*, chapter 37.

58 *E.I.*, Vol. XX, pp 6 ff (S. K. Dikshit in *Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society*, Vol. XXII, p. 16, wrongly interprets Mahāsena-here as Śiva).

59 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

60 See Oldenberg, Vol. II, p. 110.

61 *Anuśāsana*, 86.26.

62 *Varāha*, 25.49.

63 Venkaṭeśvara ed. II, chapter 11.

64 VII, *Prabhāsakṣetramāhātmya*, 215.2.

65 See *Mṛcchakaṭika*, 3rd Act (p. 84 of the edition published by Nirṇaya-sāgara Mudraṇālaya) ; see also Dr. D. C. Sircar's article in *Calcutta Police Journal*, Vol. I, pp. 6-18 *About Theft in Ancient India*.

66 See J.A.O.S., Vol. XV.

67 *Ibid.*

68 See G. W. Cox, *Aryan Mythology*, pp. 61 ff, 446 ff.

69 See also Tawney, *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. VIII, p. 141.

70 *S.I.I.*, Vol. II, part V, p. (36).

71 *B.G.*, Vol. XVIII, part I, p. 290.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 413.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Iconography

North India :—We have already seen that Patañjali (*circa* 2nd century B.C.) in his explanation of Pāṇini's *Sūtra* V. 3.99 has referred to the worship of the images of Śiva, Skanda and Viśākha in his time and also during the period of the Mauryas i. e. third century B. C. (*Mauryairhiraṇyārthibhirarcā prakalpitā*). The *Lalitavistara*, as we have previously noticed, also refers indirectly to the worship of the image of Skanda along with those of the other gods. In the Great Epic we have references (direct and indirect) to both the two-armed[1] and twelve-handed (*dvādaśabāhu Kumāraskonda*) images of Skanda[2]. The two-armed image is described as 'holding *śakti* (spear) and *ghaṇṭā* (bell) and seated on a peacock'. We will presently see that this description of the two-armed image of Kārttikeya does not totally tally with the later descriptions of the two-handed image of this god, recorded in the Purāṇas and other works.

The *Matsya Purāṇa*[3] has described in some details all the three types of the images of this deity *viz.* two-armed, four-armed and the twelve-armed. According to this Purāṇa the twelve-armed image of Kārttikeya should be set up in the towns, while the four and two-armed images should be installed in the forests and villages respectively. The two-armed image should have spear in the right hand and the left hand must be placed on the cock (*dvibhujasya kare śaktirvāmaḥ syāt kukkuṭopari*[4]). It, therefore, does not agree with the description of the Great Epic, quoted earlier, according to which a two-armed image should have *śakti* and *ghaṇṭā*. The *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* (6th cent. A. D.) of Varāhamihira[5] also describes the two-armed image of this god with *śakti* in one of his hands. The attribute of the other hand is not told. According to this description, Skanda is boyish in appearance and his main cognizance is peacock (*Skandaḥ Kumārarūpaḥ Śaktidharaḥ barhiketuśca*). Exactly this description is found in the

Bhaviṣya Purāṇa[6] (*Brāhmaparvan*). The two-armed image (*dvibhujabālarūpadhṛk*) is also described in the *Agni Purāṇa*[7]. According to this description the image should hold *śakti* in the right and cock in the left hand (*dakṣe śaktiḥ kukkuṭottha ekavaktrotha Ṣaṇmukhaḥ*).

According to the *Matsya Purāṇa* a four-armed image of Kārttikeya should have the following attributes-*śakti*, *pāśa*, *varada* and *abhaya* :—

Caturbhuje śakti-pāśau vāmato dakṣiṇe tvasiḥ ।
varado'bhayado vāpi dakṣiṇaḥ syāt turīyakaḥ ॥

In the *Śiva Purāṇa*[8] a vivid description of the four-armed image of this deity is found. The relevant lines are here quoted :—

Udayādityasaṅkāśaṃ mayūravaravāhanam ।
caturbhujamudārāṅgaṃ mukuṭādivibhūṣitam ॥
varadābhayahastañca śaktikukkuṭadhāriṇam ।

Here *pāśa* is replaced by cock(*kukkuṭa*) while the other attributes are the same as in the *Matsya Purāṇa*. It further adds that the image must be crowned and should have other ornaments (*mukuṭādivibhūṣitam*). There is another description of the four-armed image in the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*.[9] Here the four forms of Kārttikeya *viz*. Kumāra, Skanda, Viśākha and Guha are described. According to this description Kumāra has six faces. He is adorned with a tuft of hair. He wears a red garment and rides on a peacock. In his right hand are a cock and a bell. In the left hand there are *Vaijayantī* banner and a spear. Skanda, Viśākha and Guha should be made like Kumāra but with the difference that they do not possess six faces and do not ride on peacocks :—

Caturmūrteḥ Kumārasya rūpaṃ te vacmi Yādava ।
Kumāraśca tathā Skando Viśākhaśca Guhastathā ॥
Kumāraḥ Ṣaṇmukhaḥ kāryaḥ śikhaṇḍakavibhūṣaṇaḥ ।
raktāmbaradharaḥ kāryo mayūravaravāhanaḥ ॥
kukkuṭaśca tathā ghaṇṭā tasya dakṣiṇahastayoḥ ।
patākā vaijayantī ca śaktiḥ kāryā ca vāmayoḥ ॥

Skando Viśākhaśca Guhaḥ kartavyaśca Kumāravat ॥
Ṣaṇmukhāste na kartavyā na mayūragatāstathā. ॥

The above-quoted lines are also found in the *Vratakhaṇḍa* of Hemādri. The *Agni Purāṇa*[10] refers to six-handed images of Kārttikeya, We have already remarked that the Great Epic refers to the twelve-armed image of Skanda-Kārttikeya. As this god had six faces, it is natural that he should be twelve-handed. This is the description of the twelve-armed Kārttikeya found in the *Matsya Purāṇa*[11] :—

Śaktiḥ pāśastathā khaḍgaḥ śaraḥ śūlaṃ tathaiva ca ।
varadaścaikahastaḥ syādatha cābhayado bhavet ॥
ete dakṣiṇato jñeyāḥ keyūra-kaṭakojjvalāḥ ।
dhanuḥ patākā muṣṭiśca tarjanī tu prasāritā ॥
kheṭakaṃ tāmracūḍañca vāmahaste tu śasyate ।

No image of this god, which can safely be assigned to the pre-Christian period, has been discovered. We have already referred to the goat-headed 'Nemeṣo' found in a Mathurā relief of the first century A.D. The same place has yielded a number of other early images of this god. The images found in Mathurā are invariably two-armed and and can be grouped in two types-Kuṣāṇa and Gupta. The images are all preseved in the Mathurā museum.

No. 2949 of the Mathurā collection was discovered from a well, not far from the famous old site of Kaṅkali Ṭilā[12]. The image belongs to the Kuṣāṇa period and is made of speckled red sandstone (Fig. 1). Fortunately, the image bears a dated inscription in the Kuṣāṇa character. We learn from the inscription that the image was set up by four Kṣatriya brothers. The date given is the year 11. As the inscription is in the Kuṣāṇa character, there cannot be any doubt the date refers to the era of Kaniṣka and, therefore, falls within the period of his reign This gives us the date 89 A.D. This is the earliest datable image of the god and is, therefore, of unique importance.

The icon has only one head and two hands. It has a height of 3′. The right hand gives protection (*abhaya*) and

the left holds at the waist a *śakti*, the blade of which rests against a profusely-ornamented cushion. The hair is combed beautifully and is shown falling on the back of the neck. The image is crowned (cf. '*mukuṭādi vibhūṣitam*', *Śiva Purāṇa, Kailāśa*, 11.21) and wears all kinds of ornaments like earring, torque, amulets (*aṅgada*) and bracelets, 'all typical of Kuṣāṇa art'. The god wears a *dhoti* and a scarf which is wound round the waist. It is a highly impressive piece of sculpture and one of the finest specimens of the Kuṣāṇa art. The image is in a good state of preservation, although the tip of the nose is slightly damaged. We should also note that the image does not wholly agree with the iconographic description of the two-armed image of Kārttikeya found either in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* or the *Matsya Purāṇa*. His characteristic weapon *śakti* is there, but the attribute of the other hand is '*abhaya*' instead of *ghaṇṭā* (according to the *Mbh.*) or cock (*Agni Purāṇa*).

From Mathurā have been unearthed a number of statuettes of Kārttikeya which can be assigned to the Kuṣāṇa period. All these figures are now preserved in the Mathurā museum[13]. No. 1022 of the Mathurā collection is a standing figure of Kārttikeya. The height is only 6″. Like the previous image (described above) the right hand is in the *abhayamudrā* position and the left holds a spear. The god has also a small beard. No. 1579 of the Mathurā museum is a headless round statuette ($4\frac{1}{4}$″) of Kārttikeya. The deity rides on his peacock, facing front. The attributes are the same *viz. abhaya* and *śakti*. The figure wears a torque, an armlet and a scarf. Two loose locks are falling on the shoulders and small traces of the sacred thread are also visible. No. 2332 of the Mathurā collection has been doubtfully assigned to the Kuṣāṇa period (Fig. 2). This is also a two-armed standing image of Kārttikeya. It is a 5″ high statuette. The figure is haloed. Unlike the other statuettes, discussed above, it holds the spear in the right hand and a cock in the left[14]. The figure is in a bad state of preservation. The lower portion, from the thigh downwards, is missing. The attributes agree with the description of the two-armed image found in

the *Agni Purāṇa* (50.27) and the *Aṃśumadbhedāgama*[15]. Dr. Agrawala[16] had first assigned it to the second century A. D. The same scholar in the *J.U.P.H.S.*, Vol. XXII, p. 140, however, places it in the early Gupta period[17]. Another highly interesting 2nd-3rd-century image of Kārttikeya, seated upon a peacock, is preserved in the Lucknow museum ; the image is two-armed with a cock in the left hand ; the right hand is broken, but it must have held *śakti*. The image agrees with the description of two-armed image in the *Aṃśumadbhedāgama*[18]. Late Col. D.H. Gordon possessed a fourth-century image of Kārttikeya which is said to have been discovered at Sahri Bahol (W. Pakistan). The image like No. 2332 of the Mathurā museum is two-armed with cock and spear[19].

A similar statuette of this god (Fig. 3) was discovered not long ago from Taxila. The original discoverer Khan Sahib Siddiqui[20] had described it as an image of Kubera (*?*). Dr. V.S. Agrawala has shown that it is nothing but a figure of the War-god[21]. A detailed description of this image has been given by R.C. Kar[22]. Like No. 2332 of the Mathurā collection this 8″ high image has spear in the right hand and cock in the left (and not parrot as supposed by Siddiqui). The god wears a *dhoti* which reaches down the knee and a waist-girdle *(Kaṭibandha)*. "The legs are encased in what look like high boots, which remind us of the early figures of the Sun-god". The upper part of the body is bare but has a pair of *hāras* with faint traces of the sacred thread. The head is adorned with an ornamented cap and the arms have the conventional ornaments like the *kuṇḍalas* and *valayas*. The figure is haloed and resembles, according to Kar, the statuette of Viṣṇu, made of potstone, found from Taxila[23], which has been described as one of the 'latest specimens of the Gandhāra Art'. Kar places this image of Kārttikeya in the 4th-5th century A.D. Thit is the only image of the god found from that famous place.

We should also refer in this connection to the iconographic representation of the god on the coins of the pre-Gupta age. We have already discussed this in a previous chapter. On the coins of Huviṣka the deity, with his different aspects,

is invariably depicted as two-armed. The god Mahāsena (another aspect of Kārttikeya) is represented on some gold coins with a standard in the right hand. His left hand rests upon a sword. Such a representation of the god is not found elsewhere and is not supported by any ancient text on Iconography. This may, therefore, be considered as one of the most remarkable representations of the god. On other coins of the same king Skanda and Viśākha have a sword at waist (Fig 4B). Skanda holds in his right hand standard, surmounted by bird (evidently a cock). Viśākha has a spear in his left hand. Both one-headed and polycephalous forms of this god are found on the coins of the Yaudheyas. But the figures, whether one or six-headed, are invariably two-armed. The right hand holds a spear and the left rests on the hip, instead of on the sword, as in the case of the coins of Huviṣka. Six-headed representation of this deity is absent in the pre-Gupta sculptures of the god, found so far in India. On some coins of the Yaudheyas the deity is represented with one head and the head radiate. On some other coins we get also the representation of the peacock with the figure of Skanda-Kārttikeya.

A number of images of Skanda-Kārttikeya belonging to the Gupta age, have been discovered from various places of Northern India. We will discuss here some of the important images among them. Mathurā, which has yielded a number of pre-Gupta images of Kārttikeya, has also produced a good number of Gupta images of this god. No. 2019 of the Mathurā collection is a $4\frac{1}{4}''$-high statuette of the early Gupta period. It is a two-armed image with the left hand in the *abhayamudrā* position and spear in the right. No. 446 (2′ 6″) of the Mathurā collection is a highly interesting specimen of the Gupta sculpture. It is a two-armed representation of Skanda, carved in relief. Here the deity rides on a beautifully-carved peacock. The right hand is unfortunately damaged (which was probably in the *abhayamudrā* position) and the left holds a spear. The hair is arranged, in matted locks, with a pair of loose locks falling on the shoulder. The relief shows the *abhiṣeka* of Kārttikeya as a *devasenāpati* (generalissimo of the gods). He

is being anoInted by the four-faced Brahman and Śiva. The for mer is on his right and the latter on his left. Both of them are shown pouring sacred water from the jars on Skanda's head. Two smaller figures can be recognised behind Brahman and Śiva. One of them is headless and the other is a goat-faced deity with a trident in hand and he is no other than the god Naigameya or 'Nemeṣo' of the earlier Mathurā relief, des-cribed by Bühler.[24] The peacock is standing, facing with its outspread wings on both sides. The plumage is carved at the back in the form of halo.

No. 466 of the Mathurā museum is a two-armed image of Kārttikeya, riding on his peacock. This headless image has been assigned to the Gupta age by Dr. Agrawala.[25] That learned scholar further informs us that this form of the deity is referred to by Kālidāsa in his *Raghuvaṃśa*[26] (VI.4). Another terracotta panel (1′ 2″) shows Kārttikeya, riding a peacock and holding a *śakti* in the left hand. This is one of the unique representations of the god.[27]

The well-known two-armed image of the Lalitkalā Bhavan, Benares is another fine specimen of the Gupta Art.[28] The right hand of the image holds a *śakti*. The deity is squatting on his peacock and feeding it with a lemon, which he holds in his left (Fig. 5). Prof. S. K. Saraswati describes the image as 'plastically heavier and spiritually inferior' ; but another writer[29] observes. "the pose and the whole atmosphere is one of astonishing repose and dignity". The bare expanse of his ample chest is set off by the halo of the feather of his mount ; "the introspective, detached attitude is one of the interesting features of this particular image". The writer of 'Rūpam' quite wrongly assigns the image to the late mediaeval period. There cannot be any doubt that the image belongs to the Gupta age.

An extremely interesting image of Kārttikeya, belonging to the Gupta age, was discovered from Kanauj (Fig. 6), not long ago, and is now preserved in the State museum, Lucknow.[30] The god is seated in the *Lalitāsana* pose on the peacock. This is a two-armed image with *śakti* in the left and the right hand is employed in the peaceful task of feeding grapes to the

peacock. This is a highly finished product of the Gupta age and may be described as one of the triumphs of the North Indian school of Art. The image is profusely ornamented with *keyūra, valaya* and *mekhalā*. The deity smiles immaculately. The figure shows extremely high taste on the part of the sculptor. Brahman and Indra are seen pouring water on Kārttikeya's head. This is the only image of Skanda-Kārttikeya discovered from the ancient city of Kanauj.

A unique image of Kārttikeya was discovered in the Gupta temple of Śiva at Bhumra[31] from one of rhe panels of the class called *caitya*-windows. The figure of Kārttikeya is carved in a medallion (Fig. 7). He is represented with one head and two hands. The god rides on the back of his mount, the peacock. A small bell hangs round the neck of the bird. The deity holds a round object (either thunderbolt or lemon) in his right hand and trident in the left. A necklace, with a huge circular pendant, is hanging from the neck of the deity. This form of representing the god is not known anywhere. It does not compare unfavourably with the two Gupta images found from Benares and Kanauj respectively. Like other images of the Bhurma temple, it testifies to the skill and artistry of its creator.[32]

Another beautiful image of two-armed Kārttikeya is found in one of the niches of the famous Gupta temple at Deoghar (Jhansi district). Here also the deity rides on his favourite *vāhana*, the peacock, which too, is not unfavourably represented. A twelve-armed image of Kārttikeya, belonging to the Gupta period, is found sculptured, in a lintel at Pawaya in the former Gwalior state.[33] The image is six-headed and has a hood of snake forming a canopy over his heads, "a feature not observed, in any one of the extant images of the god, found in Northern India, and also not supported by the testimony of any iconographic text".[34] Sculpturally, the image is entirely different from those found in other parts of India. The most striking feature about the image is the absence of any weapon or implement in any one of the twelve hands. It has been supposed that the image may be of Sanatkumāra who is the prototype of Kārttikeya and who is

identified in the well-known *Chāndogya* passage with Skanda. There is much force in this argument, as the image is definitely free from any martial trait. The god (whose four heads are only visible) is shown standing. He wears a necklace, a bracelet and a lower garment, reaching down to ankles, with a tuft hanging in between his two legs. The hair is arranged in *jaṭā* fashion like that of a sage. He has on each of his two sides, 3 figures, all male, excepting one. It should be noted that this is the earliest representation of twelve-armed Skanda-Kārttikeya in North India. We have seen that the twelve-armed images of this deity are referred to in the Great Epic and the *Matsya Purāṇa*.

A number of sculptures of Kārttikeya, belonging to the Gupta age, have been discovered from different places of Rajasthan. Few years ago, a two-armed beautiful image of Kārttikeya was discovered from Nagar[35]. The deity, seated on the peacock, holds a *śakti* in his left hand and the right hand is damaged (Fig. 8). The *ekāvalī* round the neck is decorated with a pendant. This particular image has been compared with the Lalitkalā Kārttikeya. R. C. Agrawala thinks it to be the earliest representation of the deity from the state of Rajasthan. The image, though weather-beaten, is a sculptural piece of high artistic value.

Another image (possibly of the Gupta age) was found from Bairat and is now preserved in the Central museum, Jaipur. The image has three heads and six arms. Some of the hands are broken but a cock and a shield, held in the left hands, can be recognised without any difficulty. The remnants of a spear in the upper right hand can be seen clearly. The god wears an *ekāvalī* round the neck. The peacock turns its head towards the god and is very beautifully sculptured. The halo of serpent-hoods behind the head of Kumāra adds to the beauty of the whole piece and reminds us of the twelve-armed Pawaya image. Flying *gandharvas* and *apsarās* are found sculptured on either side of the god. The dress and ornaments suggest that it is a product of the Gupta art. And if this view be accepted, then it will have to be regarded as the first example of three-headed Kārttikeya image

in India. We have already remarked that the *Agni Purāṇa*[36] refers to the six-handed Kārttikeya. Another three-faced image of Kārttikeya is found in the ancient temple of Ranachhodaryaji at Kheda near Jodhpur.[37]

We have already referred to the two-armed image of Kārttikeya on some gold coins of Kumāra Gupta I. The left hand has a spear over the shoulder and the right is in the *varada* pose. The god rides on a peacock. The figure is placed on an elaborate *pañcarātra* pedestal[38] (Fig. 4A).

Another two-armed image was found from Hathair in South-west Rajasthan.[39] The god holds a *śakti* in the left hand and a citron fruit in the right. The peacock is near the left leg. "The image is in no way inferior to the contemporary reiief of Kārttikeya from Samalji"[40]

There is a large two-armed figure of Kārttikeya in the Elephanta cave[41]. The god wears all sorts of conventional ornaments.

It should be noted in this connection that most of the early images of this god (both pre-Gupta and Gupta) are two-armed ; this is also the case with other Brahmanical gods of ancient India.[42] The post-Gupta images, as we shall see presently, are, however, mostly four-armed or twelve-armed.

Elsewhere we have remarked that Skanda-Kārttikeya's popularity declined in some parts of Northern India in the post-Gupta period. Ir would, however, be wrong to suppose that he disappeared completely from the Hindu pantheon after the Gupta age. Repeated references to his worship in the post-Gupta literature suggest that he was still very much alive in people's imagination. The *Viṣṇudharmottara*, which is supposed to be a post-Gupta work, refers to his four forms. Several post-Gupta North Indian images of this deity are known.

Two images of Kārttikeya were found from the monolithic Viṣṇu temple at Masrur, 8 miles from Kangra.[43] Kārttikeya, along with other deities like Viṣṇu, Indra, Gaṇeśa, Durgā, appears in one of the lintels of the main shrine (XXXIII a). Another image was discovered after the excavation (Plate XXXIIC). This is a damaged, six-headed image, with upper portion almost completely effaced (Fig. 9). The image has

four hands, one in the *Varada* and another in the *Abhaya* pose. The attributes of the other hands cannot be recognised. The image is extremely graceful and stylistically superior to most of the mediaeval images of Kārttikeya. Hargreaves assigns the temple to the eighth century A.D.

Another interesting mediaeval image of Kārttikeya is found in the ninth-century temple of Avantīśvara (situated on the right bank of the Vitastā, 18 miles above Srinagar), founded by king Avantīvarman.[44] This is a six-headed but six-armed image of the god.[45] The attributes of most of the hands cannot be recognised except one or two. A thunderbolt in the lowest right hand and bell in the upper left can be recognised without any difficulty.

The Nagpur museum possesses an interesting twelve-armed, six-headed image of Kārttikeya. It bears various types of weapons and a wild cock. The deity, however, does not sit on his peacock which, is to be seen beside him.[46] The weapons of the god are generally those which are mentioned in the *Matsya Purāṇa* (260. 48-49). It is a product of the mediaeval period.

A red sandstone relief from Kakuni near Kotah (Rajasthan), now preserved in the museum of Sarasvatī Bhāṇḍār at Kotah, (Fig. 14) is another highly finished piece of sculpture of Kārttikeya.[47] It is a six-headed, six-armed image, seated on the *vāhana* peacock, which the deity is feeding with a ball of sweets held in the lowermost left hand. In the remaining two left hands the deity holds a bow and an arrow, while the right hands bear a sword, and a spear. A quiver of arrows hangs behind his right shoulder. The weapons are certainly worthy of the Indian Mars. He has, on both sides, two beautiful females.

At Ranoda, (in the former Gwalior state) was found a unique image of twelve-armed, six-headed Kārttikeya (Fig. 10). The image is entirely unconventional and has nothing to do with any of the known images of this deity.[48]

Orissan images of Kārttikeya :—Probably the oldest image of Kārttikeya from Orissa was that discovered from Dhudhuā[49]. The image is weather-beaten and primitive

(Fig. 11). The god sits astride a peacock, and not cock as supposed by Vasu. The right hand holds a spear (*śakti*) but the attribute of the left hand cannot be recognised. The image is in a bad state of preservation and is not graceful.

The temples of the sacred city of Bhuvaneśvara contain some interesting images of the War-god.[50]. One such image is to be found in the temple of Parameśvara situated at a distance of less than a furlong from the sacred Kedārakuṇḍa. The god sits on a throne, carved with a peacock, killing a serpent. The image is placed in the central niche of the temple. Another very elegant sculpture is found in the Megheśvara temple (late 12th cent. A.D.) A number of beautiful images of Skanda are found in the Bhuvaneśvara temple-complex. On the western niche of the *Vimāna* of the Bhuvaneśvara temple can be seen the figure of Kārttikeya, standing on a pedestal of lotus. The part of the pedestal below the lotus, referred to, presents a nice front carved with artistic floral devices. This highly ornamented figure has all the characteristics of the mediaeval Orissan sculpture. The peacock, with broken head, is represented with all its glory. The side deities hold garlands and are represented with equal skill. Two four-headed images of Kārttikeya can be noticed in the temple of Vṛṣabha. The figures hold *khaḍga* (sacrificial scimitar), *kamaṇḍalu* (bowl), *triśūla* and *ḍamaru*. The figures are seated on the peacock. Another image of a twelve-armed, six-headed Kārttikeya can be seen on one of the walls of the temple of Vimalā, situated in the compound of Bhuvaneśvara temple. The image has following attributes-*dhanus*, *śara*, *gadā*, *śaṅkha*, *triśūla*, *pināka*, *abhaya*, *varada*, *padma*. *pāśa*, *cakra* and *aṅkuśa*. A number of beautiful images of Kārttikeya are also to be noticed on the walls of the Mārkaṇḍeśvara temple at Puri.

A tenth-century standing Kārttikeya from Puri is preserved in the Asutosh Museum, Calcutta. The image is two-armed, but the hands are broken. It is a highly graceful sculpture with all the fine characteristics of the Orissan Art. Another Kārttikeya image from Bhuvaneśvara is preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta[51] (Fig. 12) This is a typical

specimen of the latest phase of the later mediaeval Orissan Art.

Images of Kārttikeya in Bengal :—In a previous chapter we have shown that Kārttikeya was highly popular in North Bengal in the mediaeval times. Most of the images, which are preserved in the various museums of the undivided Bengal, hail from the districts of Northern Bengal.

No. 224 of the Asutosh Museum is a two-armed seated image of Kārttikeya, seated astride a peacock. The left hand holds a *śakti* (spear) and the right hand rests on the knee. It is a small (10″) but a highly finished image of the tenth century A.D. The sculpture comes from the Dinajpur district. The Asutosh Museum possesses also a bigger, four-armed seated image of Kārttikeya (2½′). The image was found from Kaligram, Rajshahi. This icon has been assigned to the eleventh century A.D. The head of the peacock is broken. The back right hand probably holds *śakti*. The front right hand is in the gift-bestowing pose (*varada*). The back left gives protection and the front left rests on the knee. There is another tenth-century Kārttikeya image preserved in the Asutosh Museum. The find-spot of the image is not known. All the hands of the icon are broken. The image may be assigned to the tenth century A.D. on stylistic grounds.

A highly graceful four-armed image of *Śikhivāhana* Kārttikeya is (Fig. 13) preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta[52]; the image is finely decorated. The front right hand is in the *varada* pose and the back right has *śakti*. The front left rests on the knee while the 4th hand is broken. "The graceful attitude and feeling of calm repose as well as the dreamy eyes of this figure mark it out as a remarkable product of the Bengal school of Art." N. G. Majumdar assigns it to the twelveth century A.D. The image is crowned. The whole face is lit up with an unforgettable smile. It is indeed one of the triumphs of the mediaeval school of Art of Bengal. This image also comes from North Bengal.

There is another image of four-armed standing Kārttikeya from Bihar (*?*) in the Indian Museum. The peacock, which is on the right side of the deity, is sculptured in a lively fashion,

although the head is broken. On the left side of the god is Kumārī holding up with her right hand a lotus-pedestal on which stands a headless cock, on which the right hand of the god rests. The two right hands are broken. The image is stylistically inferior to the North Bengal Śikhivāhana.[53]

The Rajshahi Museum (now in East Pakistan) possesses a few specimens of Kārttikeya images.[54] One of them is a standing sandstone image with one head and two hands. The image is sadly mutilated. The right hand holds a weapon resting on the mutilated figure of a peacock. The sculpture is probably older than any image of Kārttikeya found in Bengal. It was discovered from Singbhum district, Bihar. There is another corroded sandstone image of Kārttikeya, seated on a beautiful figure of a peacock with its plumage expanded. The image comes from Deopara, Rajshahi. The same place has yielded another image of Kārttikeya.

An image of Kārttikeya was noticed by N. K. Bhattasali[55] in the Vaiṣṇava monastery at Abdullapur in the district of Dacca. It is a black stone image about 3′ in height. The god sits in the *Mahārājalīlā* posture on the back of his vehicle, the peacock. The bird with its spreading plumage forms a halo behind the deity. The image is two-armed, with right hand in the *abhayamudrā* position and the left hand holding a spear. An umbrella is conspicious at the top, a feature unknown in other Kārttikeya images.

The present writer has recently noticed a two-armed mediaevel image of Kārttikeya seated on his *vāhana*, the peacock, in a modern temple at Raghunathganj, Murshidabad. The right hand holds *śakti* and a cock is placed on the left; the figure, therefore, agrees wonderfully with the description of the two-armed Kārttikeya found in the *Matsya Purāṇa*. Probably the image was brought from some nearby place and built in to the wall of the present temple; the icon, though weather-beaten, is graceful.

It should be noted that twelve-armed images of Kārttikeya are not found anywhere in Bengal or Bihar. In other parts of Northern India, as we have noticed, there is no dearth of twelve-armed images of this deity.

A highly artistic twelve-armed image of Kārttikeya (Fig. 15) was discovered at the shrine of Khermai[56] (modern village of Tewar, the ancient Tripurī, the capital of the Haihayas). It was probably built, according to R.D. Banerji, during the reign of Karṇadeva or any one of his immediate successors. The image is very badly mutilated. Still it is one of the liveliest piece of sculptures collected at the shrine of Khermai. The god stands on the ground and the peacock is to be seen behind him It is a three-headed figure with all the twelve hands broken. There is a female attendant standing with a garland on each side. They too, are beautifully represented. We can also notice the mutilated figures of four other attendants. The figure is 3′ 3″ in height. Stylistically the image is entirely different from other images of the deity.

Kārttikeya also appears in the great *toraṇa* of Gurgi now re-erected in front of the Mahārāja's palace at Rewa. According to R. D. Banerji[57] this *toraṇa* formed a part of the great Śiva temple built by Yuvarāja I. Here the deity is represented with six heads, but strangely enough, with ten hands, standing under a tree with a fringe of mangoes. The peacock stands on his left. A number of his hands are broken. One of the left hands holds a bowl (*kamaṇḍalu*), another a shield. Two of his right hands hold a bird and a lotus-stalk.

We should also refer to the image of Kārttikeya[58], placed in the central niche of the north side of the temple of Baijnath (near Garur, in the Almora district), the ancient Kārttikeyapura.[59] The image has a height of 2′ 4″. The god is seated on the peacock (Fig 16). He is represented as Ṣaḍānana but with four hands One of the four arms holding a *śakti* is broken with part of that attribute. One of the right hands is in the *varada* position. The two remaining hands hold a *cakra* (wheel) and a fruit (probably lemon). The image belongs to the late mediaeval period (early 13th-century A.D.). The icon is not free from the local influence and has a round face with flat nose. The deity smiles with the simplicity of a plain man of the hills. It is certainly a very remarkable piece of sculpture.

South India :—In a previous chapter we observed that the cult of Subrahmaṇya was and is still extremely popular in South India. He is worshipped in almost every Tamil-speaking village South Indian Sanskrit texts like the *Kumāratantra* or the *Śrītattvanidhi* have described the images of several aspects of this god *viz.* 1. Śaktidhara 2. Skanda 3. Senāpati 4. Subrahmaṇya 5. Gajavāhana 6. Śaravaṇabhava 7. Kārttikeya 8. Kumāra 9. Ṣaṇmukha 10. Tārakāri 11. Senānī 12. Brahma-śāstā 13. Valli Kalyāṇasundaramūrti 14. Bālasvāmin 15. Krauñcabhettā 16. Śikhivāhana. The *Śrītattvanidhi* has added a few more to the above list. We will here follow Gopinath Rao's [60] description of the different aspects of Subrahmaṇya images as found in these two Sanskrit texts.

Śaktidhara, according to the *Kumāratantra* (2nd *paṭala*), should be represented with one head and two hands. The attribute of the left arm is *vajra* and that of the right is *śakti*. This description is, therefore, somewhat different from those recorded in the North Indian texts about two-armed Kārttikeya. According to the poet of the *Kumāratantra*, *śakti* represents will, knowledge and action (*icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā*). The *Śrītattvanidhi*, on the other hand, represents this aspect of Skanda with one head and four arms. It also gives a detailed description of the different ornaments to be worn by him. The attributes of the four arms, according to this text, are *śakti*, *kukkuṭa*, *vajra* and *abhaya*.

According to the *Kumāratantra* Skanda too, should be represented with one head and two arms, and must have the colour of the lotus. The right arm should hold a *daṇḍa* and the left should be in the *Kaṭyavalambita* pose (resting on the hip). Except *kaupina* (loin-cloth) he should wear nothing. Rao further informs us that this form of Subrahmaṇya is popularly known as the Palaniyandavar. In the *Śrītattvanidhi*, however, the above description occurs for Velāyudha Subrahmaṇya. It gives an altogether different account of Skanda. According to this description Skanda must have one face but four hands. He should sit on the *padmāsana*, and should be shown nimbate (*prabhā-maṇḍala*). He should wear the con-

ventional ornaments. The attributes of the different arms are *varada*, *abhaya*, cock and *vajra*. His colour should be that of the smoke (*dhūmravarṇa*).

The *Kumāratantra* represents Senāpati with six heads and twelve eyes. One of his left hands should pass round the waist of his wife, who must be seated upon his left lap. The corresponding right hand should hold a lotus. His other attributes are *śūla*, *kheṭaka*, *vajra*, *dhanus*, *gadā*, *ghaṇṭā*. *kukkuṭa* and *abhaya*. The *Śrītattvanidhi* represents him as one-headed and four-armed and gives the following attributes-*abhaya*, *varada*, *śaṅkha* and *cakra*. He is dark (*śyāmavarṇa*) and is adorned with various ornaments. He should always smile and must be shown as handsome.

The Subrahmaṇya aspect is described both as four-armed and two-armed. In the case of four arms the attributes should be *abhaya*, *śakti*, *kukkuṭa* and *padma*. In the case of two arms, one should rest upon the hip and the other should give protection. He should have the colour of *Kuṅkuma*.

Gajavāhana is described in the *Kumāratantra* with only one face, two eyes and four arms. The attributes of the two left hands are *kukkuṭa* and *varada* ; the right hand must have the attributes *śakti* and *abhaya*.

Śaravaṇabhava is six-headed, twelve-eyed, and twelve-armed. The attributes are *abhaya*, *varada*, *śakti*, *ghaṇṭā*, *dhvaja*, *padma*, *kukkuṭa*, *pāśa*, *ṭaṅka*, *bāṇa* and *dhanus*. His complexion is yellow and the face should resemble a full-blown lotus. The *Śrītattvanidhi* makes Śaravaṇabhava an one-headed, three-eyed and six-armed god. He should have the colour of the rising sun (*bālasūryasamaprabha*) and is seated upon a lion. The objects in the hands are a bow made of sugar-cane, *khaḍga*, *kheṭaka*, *vajra*, *kukkuṭa* and flowery arrows (*puṣpa-bāṇa*).

Kārttikeya, according to the *Kumāratantra*, is six-armed. His colour is that of the rising sun (*taruṇaravisamaprabha*). The attributes are *varada*, *abhaya*. *vajra*, *kheṭaka*, *śakti* and *khaḍga*. The *Śrītattvanidhi*, as usual, gives a different account. According to it Kārttikeya should have three eyes and ten arms. His complexion is that of the rising sun. His head

should be adorned with a fruit (or leaf) of the *bilva* tree. His right hands must have *śūla, cakra, aṅkuśa* and *abhaya*. The left hands should hold *tomara, pāśa, śaṅkha, vajra* and *varada*. The peacock should be by his side. He is also *bālasūryasama-prabham*.

Kumāra should hold in his right hands *śakti* and *khaḍga* and in the left ones *kukkuṭa* and *kheṭaka*. The *Śrītattvanidhi* has *abhaya* and *varada* in place of *khaḍga* and *kheṭaka*.

The complexion of Ṣaṇmukha should be of the colour of saffron (*kuṅkuma*) and he should have the peacock as his vehicle. He is six-headed and twelve-armed. The attributes of the right hands are, *śakti, bāṇa, khaḍga, dhvaja, gadā* and *abhaya* ; the left hands must have *dhanus, vajra, padma, kaṭaka* and *kheṭaka*. The *Śrītattvanidhi* omits some of these objects and mentions some others instead. It further adds that the two *Devīs* Jayā and Vijayā should be on either side of Ṣaṇmukha.

Tārakāri according to the *Kumāratantra* must be represented with twelve arms. The objects in his hands are *aṅkuśa, dhvaja, khaḍga, kaṭaka, abhaya, pāśa, cakra, murala, śakti, vajra, varada* and *kheṭaka*. His colour is described as equal to a crore of Aruṇas. The *Śrītattvanidhi,* on the other hand, describes him as one-headed and three-eyed, and six-armed. He should sit on the elephant. His attributes are *khaḍga, śakti, abhaya, varada, kheṭaka* and *akṣamālā*.

Krauñcabhettā according to the *Kumāratantra* is six-headed with eight arms. The attributes of the right arms are *khaḍga, śakti, abhaya* and *bāṇa*. The attributes of the left ones are *varada, vajra, dhanus* and *kheṭaka*. He has the complexion of *kamala* (lotus). The *Śrītattvanidhi* represents him with a single face, four arms and three eyes. Two of the hands should be in the *varada* and *abhaya* pose and the remaining hands have flowery arrows and a bow made of sugar-cane or the front two hands should be sculptured as bearing the Krauñca mountain. His vehicle, peacock should be at his side.

Senānī according to the *Kumāratantra* is twelve-armed and

twelve-eyed. The attributes are *khaḍga, cakra, aṅkuśa, śakti, abhaya, śūla, varada, padma, daṇḍa* and *gadā*.

Brahma-Śāstā (subduer of Brahman) is a four-armed, one-headed deity. The back hands have *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalu* and the front hands should be held in the *varada* and *abhaya* pose. The colour of Brahma-Śāstā should be the red of the lotus flower.

Bālasvāmin is the child aspect of Subrahmaṇya. He should be sculptured with his parents like the Somaskanda figures of the Pallava age. He should be figured as a child carrying a lotus in each hand. If he is shown separately, he may be represented with a *padma* in his right hand and with the left hand resting on the hip. He is a red-coloured deity.

In the Śikhivāhana aspect Subrahmaṇya should have the colour of the coral with one head and four arms. The attributes of Śikhivāhana are lance, *vajra, abhaya* and *varada*.

In the Vallikalyāṇasundara aspect Subrahmaṇya is sculptured as being married to Vallī or Gajavallī. He has *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalu*. Brahman should act as priest and should be sculptured likewise. Viṣṇu should be represented with a water-vessel and perform the *sampradāna* ceremony. Other gods also must be shown as offering tributes to the couple. Both the bride and the groom should be adorned with all the ornaments appropriate to the occasion. This aspect of Subrahmaṇya has the typical red complexion.

The earliest known Kārttikeya image from South India comes from Nāgārjunikoṇḍa.[61] The image belongs definitely to the time of the Ikṣvākus i.e. 3rd-4th century A.D. It is a two-armed standing image (1′ 10″) in the *Samabhaṅga* pose with the left hand akimbo holding a cock. The head is almost totally damaged. The broken right hand probably held *śakti*. A head of Skanda-Kārttikeya was also discovered in 1956-57 excavations at Nāgārjunikoṇḍa.[62] The height of the head is $8\frac{1}{2}$″ ; the piece is a sculptural triumph by itself.

Although images of Murugan are referred to in the Tamil works of the Śangam period we have not found any specimen of the image of this deity from the Tamil-speaking land which can be dated with certainty before the seventh century A.D.

The *Silappadikāram*[63], *Tirumurugattruppadai* etc. refer to the images of Muruga. Some sixth-century images of the god are found in the caves of Ellora, Badami and Aihole.

The Ellora image of Kārttikeya[64] has four arms and a single face. The front right hand is unfortunately broken but it probably held *śakti* (Fig. 17). The other right hand rests upon the hip. One of the left hands carries a cock, while the other left lovingly embraces the peacock, his *vāhana*. It would be seen that the image has nothing to do with any of the iconographic descriptions of the god, discussed above. The figure has all the necessary ornaments including the sacred thread. The reason is that this particular image was sculptured long before the composition of either the *Kumāratantra* or the *Śrītattvanidhi*. The image also does not agree with the description of the four-armed Kumāra image found in the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, which was not improbably composed between the sixth and the seventh century A.D. There is a goat-headed attendant on either side of Skanda. Rao suggests that he may be Dakṣa-Prajāpati, who is said to be one of the *Parivāra Devatās* of Skanda ; but this goat-headed attendant is no other than the god Naigameya of the Great Epic or 'Nemeṣo' of the Mathurā relief.

Another early image from the Deccan is that found at the temple at Aihole.[65] Here the god Kārttikeya is shown killing the demon Tāraka i.e. in the Tārakāri-aspect (Fig. 18). He rides on the peacock and has *śakti* in his right hand with which he valiantly attacks the demon. The left hand holds *vajra*. It is also interesting to note that this image does not at all agree with the description of the Tārakāri-aspect of Subrahmaṇya or Kārttikeya found either in the *Kumāratantra* or the *Śrītattvanidhi*. The former represents him as twelve-armed, while the latter describes him as a six-handed deity. This is the earliest image of this god depicting his war with Tāraka. Both this and the Ellora image are among the finest sculptures of the War-god found so far in India.

A number of images of Kārttikeya are found in different caves at Badami.[66] A beautiful two-armed, one-headed image of Kārttikeya is found in the cave No. 1. The image

is carved in relief against the left wall of the Mahiṣamarddinī shrine. The god is seated on his *vāhana*, the peacock, which is also not ungracefully represented. Another image is found in cave No. 4 where the god is shown standing beside Pārvatī on the wall of the verandah. His image is also found on another pillar of the same verandah. Kārttikeya with his peacock is also depicted on the E-shaped corridor of the cave No. 4. He is flanked on either side by his attendants.

We have previously remarked that Skanda-Kārttikeya enjoyed some popularity in the period of the Pallavas. He appears in the seventh-century Somaskanda sculptures of Śiva. A large number of such sculptures are found at Mamallapuram.

According to Prof. Jouveau-Dubreuil the third figure at the *Trimūrti* cave at Mahabalipuram (built during the period of the Pallava king Mahendravarman I) is Subrahmaṇya in the form of Brahma-Śāstā and not Brahman as was previously supposed.[67] According to him Brahma-Śāstā is also represented on the ground floor of Dharmarāja *ratha*. Prof. Dubreuil's identification of the figure in question of the *Trimūrti* cave is accepted by such an authority as Gopinath Rao.[68] "Behind the rock, bearing the *Trimūrti* shrine, are executed the figures of a peacock, an elephant and a monkey carved in half relief". As peacock is Kārttikeya's *vāhana*, Dubreuil's suggestion is not without basis. The editor H. K. Śāstrī thinks that the figure may represent the Sun-god; but the above figures agree wonderfully with the description of Brahma-Śāstā. If this identification be accepted, then it should be regarded as the earliest image of Subrahmaṇya in the Tamil-speaking land.

The mutilated image of Bāla-Subrahmaṇya, belonging to the early Coḷa period, is one of the oldest representations of the god in the Far South.[69] The image is found in the Bāla-Subrahmaṇya temple, constructed during the reign of Rājakeśarin, identified with Āditya Coḷa. One of his hands is in the gesture of communicating divine wisdom. Another hand holds a rosary and the third bears the weapon *śakti*. The attribute of the fourth hand cannot be recognised.

We will now briefly refer to some of the images of the different aspects of the god described by Rao in his *Elements of Hindu Iconography*.

The bronze figure of Kumāra at Tiruppalatturarai has four arms (Fig. 19). One of the right hands holds *śakti* and another left, thunderbolt. The two remaining hands are in the *varada* and *abhaya* attitudes,[70]

A figure of Subrahmaṇya[71] in stone is found in the Nāgeśvarasvāmin temple at Kumbhakonam (Fig. 20). The god is represented with his two spouses Devasenā and Vallī. Like the Tiruppalatturai image the figure is four-armed. Iconographically the figure is almost similar to the bronze figure of Tiruppalatturai. The peacock is seen behind the deity. The bronze figure of Subrahmaṇya with his consorts (Fig. 21), found in the Śiva temple at Tiruvorriyur, is exactly similar to the previous figure.[72] Both the figures are executed with consummate skill. Another figure of Subrahmaṇya (Fig. 22), in stone, with his consorts, is found in Kumbhakonam.[73] Here the attributes are, however, *śakti*, *kukkuṭa*, *abhaya* and *varada*. The image is elaborately adorned. From Kumbhakonam also comes the beautiful image of Śikhivāhana Kārttikeya.[74] The right leg is hanging while the left one is bent and rests upon the peacock. The image fairly agrees with the description of Śikhivāhana Kārttikeya found in the *Kumāratantra*.

Plate CXXVI (fig. 3) of Rao's book is an admirable specimen of the Senāpati aspect of the god. The figure is now preserved in the Madras museum. The deity sits on his peacock. He embraces his consort with his right arm and the left holds a bow. The goddess, on her part, embraces her husband with the left arm and carries in her right hand an arrow.

Rao has illustrated two specimens of the Ṣaṇmukha aspect of the god. The first one comes from the Śiva temple at Pattisvaram and is in stone (Fig. 23). The attributes of the twelve hands are *abhaya*, *varada*, *śakti*, *ṭaṅka*, *cakra*, *khaḍga*, *murala*, *vajra*, *dhanus*, *bāṇa*, *kheṭaka* and *śaṅkha*. The peacock is sculptured behind the image. The attributes here do not wholly agree with the description found either in the *Kumāra-*

tantra or the *Śrītattvanidhi*. The Nallur Ṣaṇmukha[75] almost resembles the Pattisvaram image. "The *padmāsana* on which the image stands is hexagonal, specially so made to agree with the six-faced nature of the deity for whom it serves as pedestal".

Devasenā-Kalyāṇasundara aspect is illustrated by a figure in the (Fig 24) front *maṇḍapa* of the temple at Tirupparankunram near Madura. It represents the scene of marriage of Skanda with Devasenā. The god is standing with his outstretched right hand and Devasenā is on his left, standing. Indra is behind her and is seen pouring water from a vessel into the hand of Skanda. Skanda holds in his front left hand a lotus and *śakti* in the left one. Indra has *ṭaṅka* and *vajra*. Brahman is sitting and is seen in the act of doing the necessary duties of the priest. The whole scene is sculptured with rare artistry. The modesty of the bride is wonderfully portrayed in the sculpture.[76]

We have seen that the third figure at the *Trimūrti* cave probably represents the Brahma-Śāstā aspect of Skanda. Rao in his book has not given any example of the Brahma-Śāstā image. V. Raghavan, however, in the *J. I. S. O. A.* (Vol. VII, pp. 111-12) draws our attention to more than one such images of this aspect of Skanda. According to him the image in the *garbhagṛha* in the Subrahmaṇya temple at Tirupporur, 40 miles from Madras, represents actually the Brahma-Śāstā aspect of Subrahmaṇya. The two uplifted arms of the god bear *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalu* which are characteristic of Brahman whom Skanda subdued. On either side are his wives Vallī and Devasenā. Another Brahma-Śāstā image was found by T. G. Arvamuthan and C. Sivaramurti, curators of the Madras museum in the fields at Valasonavakkam, 8 miles from Madras. At Kudakarkoil in the Tanjore district Skanda is worshipped in the form of Brahma-Śāstā.

A stone image of Ṣaḍānana is preserved in the Worcester Art Museum.[77] Like the previous Ṣaḍānana images, described above, the image has twelve arms. This is a typical South Indian image. Its static immobility may be contrasted with

the fine North Indian icons, described above. "It is a mere worshipper's icon, not a spirited representation of the War-god". The most interesting feature of the image is the representation of the three back heads on the reverse side of the relief. The plumage of the peacock is very softly graded and offers a finely-graded feature of the image.

The four-armed figure from Tiruvidaikali (Fig. 25) is a beautiful specimen of the Devasenāpati aspect of Subrahmaṇya.[78] The image is haloed ; the attributes are bow, arrow, *śakti* and *vajra* ; it has been described as a fine example of the art at its best during the Coḷa times.

H. K. Śāstrī has described few other images of Kārttikeya in South India.[79] Fig. 113 of Śāstrī's book is a four-armed, (Fig. 26) standing Skanda from Tiruvottiyur ; the figure is highly graceful. Fig. 114 is a Ṣaḍānana specimen from Madura with various weapons in different hands and riding on the peacock (Fig. 27) ; figure 115 (from Samayapuram, Trichinopoly) is a stone figure of Kumāra (Fig. 28) on the peacock and attended by Vallī and Devasenā ; it is four-armed but with single face.

Another South Indian image of Kārttikeya is preserved in Musee Guimet.[80] This is a four-armed, one-headed figure of the War-god. The sculpture is very gracefully executed ; the god rides on his favourite *vāhana*, the peacock, who has a serpent in its mouth ; the attributes are *vajra, triśūla, abhaya* and *varada*.

Reference has already been made to the discovery of a granite stone-image of Kārttikeya from Rajahmundry, the ancient Puṣpagiri, the capital of the Eastern Cālukyas.[81] An inscription of the *Śaka* year 994(=1072 A.D.) was discovered from the same site. So it is reasonable to believe that the image in question is a 11th-century work. It is an image of Ṣaḍānana aspect of Kārttikeya ; fortunately all the twelve hands are intact. It has a height of 2′3″. The attributes are *abhaya, triśūla, gadā, kukkuṭa, lāṅgalī, vajra, varada, dhanus*, battle-axe, *pāśa, padma* and *ghaṇṭā*. The deity is crowned and his face is lit up with a benign smile.

NOTES

1 Cf. *Mbh.*, XIII.14.278 :—
Skando mayūramāsthāya sthito Devyāḥ samīpataḥ ।
śaktighaṇṭe samādāya dvitīya iva Pāvakaḥ ॥

2 *Mbh.*, XII.122.32.

3 *Matsya*, 260.46-51. According to Dr. Hazra this portion of the Purāṇa was composed between 350 A.D. and 650 A.D. (See *Studies in the Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, p. 176). MM. Kane *op. cit.*, Vol. V, part II, pp. 899-900, on the other hand, places this Purāṇa between 200 and 400 A.D.

4 260.50.

5 57.41.

6 132.31. According to competent authorities the *Bhaviṣya Brāhma-parvan* is as old as the 6th cent. A.D. (See *Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. II, pp. 240-70).

7 50.27.

8 *Kailāśa Saṃhitā*, 11.19-21.

9 III.71.3-7.

10 50.28.

11 260.47-50.

12 See M.M. Nagar in *J.U.P.H.S.*, 1943, part 1, pp. 62-66. See also K.D. Bajpai in *Mathurā* (Hindi), Lucknow, 1955, Plate 24.

13 See Dr. V.S. Agrawala, 'A Catalogue of Brahmanical Images in Mathurā Museum', *J.U.P.H.S.* Vol.XXII, pp. 102-210.

14 Cf. Agni *Purāṇa*'s description of two-armed Kārttikeya.

15 Quoted in Rao's *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. II, part II, App. B, p. 205.

16 *J.I.S.O.A.*, V, p. 129.

17 See also *I.H.Q.*, Vol. XXX, p. 84 and Plate II.

18 See 'A Sculpture of Kārttikeya' by R. C. Agrawala in the *Adyar Library Bulletin* (N.S.), Vol. XXIV, parts 3-4.

19 See *The Art of India and Pakistan* edited by L. Ashton, p. 41.

20 See *A.S.I.A.R.*, 1934-35, p. 31, Plate VIII (f).

21 *J.I.S.O.A.*, V, p. 129, fn. 3.

22 *I.H.Q.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 81-5.

23 See *A.S.I.A.R.*, 1935-36, p. 35, Plate XL(a) and *J.I.S.O.A.*, XIII, p. 77.

24 See *E.I.*, Vol. II, pp. 311 ff.

25 *J.U.P.H.S.*, Vol. IX, part II, p. 36.

26 *Mayūra-pṛṣṭhāśrayiṇā Guhena*. See also *Mathurā Museum Handbook* by V. S. Agrawala, p. 44.

27 *J.I.S.O.A.*, Vol. X, p. 68.

28 See S. K. Saraswati, *A Survey of Indian Sculpture*, p. 137, figure 93.

29 *Rūpam*, 1925, No. XXI, p. 41.

30 See *J.U.P.H.S.* (N. S.), Vol. V, part II, pp. 117-20, the article in Hindi by M.M. Nagar, '*Kārttikeya ki ek nava prāpta pratimā*' ; for the image see p. 118, Plate V ; also K. M. Munshi, *Saga of Indian Sculpture*, Plate 42.

31 M.A.*S.I.*, No. XVI, p. 12; plate XIII (d).

32 R. D. Banerji (*loc cit*) thinks that the temple was built in the middle of the 5th cent. A.D., probably during the time of the Parivrājaka Mahārāja Hastin, but Marshall places the temple in the 6th cent. A.D.

33 See *P.I.H.C* , Xth session, pp. 137 ff. ; also *Annual Administrative Report of Archaeological department, Gwalior State*, 1924-25, p. 10.

34 As a matter of fact the serpent-hood is present, as we shall see later, in some other images of the god.

35 See *Lalit Kalā*, 1956-7, Nos. 3 and 4, pp. 109-11, Plate LII, fig. 1.

36 50.28.

37 *A..S.I.* (W. Circle), Progress Report, 1912, p. 56.

38 See Allan and Altekar.

39 *Lalit Kalā*, 1956-57, Nos. 3 and 4, pp. 109-111.

40 See *J. I.* M., Vol. IX, Plate XV, figs. 30 and 30A.

41 See *B. G.*, XIV, p. 69 ; for a post-Gupta Kārttikeya from Tumain see H. N. Dvivedi's *Gwalior Rajyo me mūrtikalā*, fig. 52.

42 See Macdonell's article 'Early Indian Iconography' in *J.R.A.S.*, 1916, pp. 125-30 also *ibid.*, 1917, pp. 593 ff. and 1918, pp. 526 ff.; Prof. S.V. Venkateswara (*J.R.A S.*, 1917, pp, 587 ff. and 1918, pp. 519 ff) tries unsuccessfully to refute Macdonell's argument.

43 See Hargreaves in *A.S.I.A.R.*, 1915-16, p. 46.

44 See *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, V.45.

45 *A.S.I,A.R.*, 1913-14, p. 53.

46 See *Descriptive List of Exhibits at the Nagpur Museum*, p. 16, plate V, fig. 6.

47 See *Lalit Kalā*, Nos. 3 and 4, Plate LII, fig. 2.

48 See G H. Khare's *Mūrtivijñāna* in Marathi, figure 61 ; see also *ibid.*, pp. 147-54 for the description of some other images of the god.

49 N.N. Vasu, *The Archaeological Survey of Mayurbhanj*, Vol. I, fig. 6.

50 See M. M. Ganguli, *Orissa and Her Remains*.

51 For the figure see M.*A.S.I.*, No. 44, Plate VIII, figure 6.

52 See *A.S.I.A.R.* (1934-35), Plate XXIV(d) ; see also *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, p. 449.

53 See Banerji, *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*, Plate LXIa.

54 See *A Catalogue of the Archaeological Relics in the Museum of Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi*, by R. G. Basak and D. C. Bhattacharyya, p. 12.

55 See *Iconography of the Buddhist and Brahamanical Sculptures in Dacca Museum*, p. 147 ; for the figures see *ibid.*, Plate LVII (a).

56 See M.A *S.I.*, No. 23, p. 92 and Plate XXXVb.
57 *Ibid.*, p. 72.
58 See *A.S.I.A.R.*, 1905-6, p. 21, fig. 4.
59 The present writer has also noticed another small but beautiful sculpture of the god preserved in the Baijnath museum.
60 *Op. cit*, Vol. II, part II, pp. 433 ff.; for the original Sanskrit passages, see Rao's *Subrahmaṇyamūrtibhedāḥ* included in the above-mentioned work '*Pratimālakṣaṇam*', pp. 203 ff.
61 See *Indian Archaeology*, 1956-7, A Review, Plate LVIIC ; see also *The Adyar Library Bulletin* (N.S.), Vol. XXV, pp. 518-9,
62 See *Indian Archaeology*, 1956-7, A Review, Plate LVIIB.
63 Nilakanta Śāstrī (A *Hist. of South India*, p. 112) places this work in the 5th cent. A.D. ; he is supported by T. P. Meenakshi-Sundaram (A *Hist. of Tamil Literature*, p. 42). Smith suggests a still earlier date (*Early History of India*, p. 453) ; S, Vaiyapuri Pillai, however, assigns this work to a much later date (*Hist. of Tamil Language and Literature*, p. 154).
64 Rao, *op. cit.*, Plate CXXIV.
65 Rao, *op. cit.*, Plate CXXVIIa.
66 See M,*A.S.I.*, No. XXV, 'Bas reliefs of Badami' by R.D. Banerji.
67 See *E. I.*, XVII, p. 16 ; for the fig. see *Archeologie du sud de l'Inde*, Vol. II, Plate XVII B.
68 *E. I.*, Vol. XVII, p. 16, fn. 3.
69 See *J.I.H.*, *Vol.* XXXI, p. 247 and *Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV, pp. 309 ff.
70 Rao, *op. cit.*, Plate CXXI, fig. 2.
71 *Ibid* , Plate CXXII.
72 *Ibid.*, Plate CXXIII.
73 *Ibid.*, Plate CXXV.
74 *Ibid.*, Plate CXXVII.
75 Ibid., Plate CXXIX.
76 *Ibid*,, Plate CXXVIII.
77 See *Rūpam*, 1926, No. I, p. 36.
78 See *The Coḷas* by Nilakanta Śāstrī, pp. 763 f ; also the figure 76.
79 *South Indian images of Hindu gods and goddesses*, pp. 177 ff.
80 See *Asiatic Mythology* written by a host of French scholars and translated into English by F. M. Atkinson, p. 129.
81 *Procecdings and transactions of the 7th All-India Oriental Conference*, Baroda (1938), pp. 773-4.

Appendix

A Note on Kaumārī Iconography

According to the *Matsya Purāṇa*[1] the Kaumārī image should have peacock as the *vāhana* ; she should be clad in the red cloth and must have *śakti* and *śūla* as her weapons :

Kumārarūpā Kaumārī mayūravaravāhanā ।
raktavastradharā tadvacchūlaśaktidharā matā[2] ॥

The *Devī Purāṇa*[3] describes Kaumārī thus :—

Kumārarūpadhārī ca Kumāra-jananī tathā ।
Kumāraripuhantrī ca Kaumārī tena sā smṛtā ॥

In the well-known *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* (10th Book) passage Durgā is addressed as Kanyākumārī[4]. She was regarded as a member of the family of 'seven Mothers' all of whom were looked upon as the different aspects of the goddess Śakti or Durgā, the spouse of Mahādeva. In course of time this goddess (Kaumārī) was made Kārttikeya's wife and came also to be known as Kumārī or Kārttikeyānī.[5]. The name Kumārī instinctively reminds us of the term 'Kanyākumārī' applied to Durgā in the well-known *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* passage, referred to above. There is reason to believe that Kumārī is a shorter form of the term 'Kanyākumārī' which is both the name of a place (the southernmost point of the Indian peninsula) and that of a goddess. The *Matsya Purāṇa*[6] describes her as the daughter of Lalitā and mentions Māyāpurī as a place sacred to her, *Māyāpuryāṃ Kumārī tu santāne Lalitā tathā* ; she is also mentioned in the *Brahmāṇḍa*, IV.26-73-117 where her military skill has been eulogised. According to this account the goddess Kumārī killed all the sons of the demon Bhaṇḍa.

Reference to the worship of the goddess Kaumārī or Kumārī at Cape Comorin is found in the famous *Periplus*[7], written by an unknown Greek sailor in the second half of the 1st century A. D.

The earliest Kaumārī sculpture goes back to the Gupta period. Her image along with those of other 'Mothers' is found near Eran.[8] Her icon is also to be noticed in the Elephanta Cave (as has been noted above), where she is distinctly called Kārttikeyānī. The goddess here has two arms and she is seen seated upon the peacock. A four-armed Kaumārī image (Fig. 29) was found at Bheraghat (Jabalpur, M.P.). It was assigned to the Kuṣāṇa period by R.D. Banerji[9]; the writer in *J.A.S.B.* (Letters), Vol.XXII. pp. 237 ff., however, places this image in the second half of the 7th century A.D.[10] The image is headless with all the hands broken. Another 7th-century Kaumārī sculpture is found in the Gwalior museum; the image is two-armed and has *śakti* and lotus as the attributes[11] A number of 8th-century sculptures of the 'seven Mothers' including that of Kaumārī were recovered from the river Vaitaraṇī 'where they were tossed by the Mughuls on their shrines being destroyed'[12]. Plate 1, fig. 4 of the M.A *S.I.*, No. 44 is a huge four-armed image of the goddess Kaumārī (Fig. 30) with a pot-bellied child seated on the left knee. The deity has an unaffected smile on her lips. The goddess is very boldly executed with peacock, carved on the base; much prominence has been given to the two breasts. Plate IX, fig. 1 (*ibid*) is another Kaumārī image found from Puri (Fig. 31); this image is more sophisticated than the Jajpur icon and is perhaps of somewhat later date.

NOTES

1 261.27.

2 Cf. *Devīmāhātmya*, VIII. 17.

3 307.85.

4 *Kātyāyanyā vidmahe Kanyākumārī dhīmahi, tan no Durgā pracodayāt.*

5 The latter name is found on the pedestal of the image of the goddess in the Elephanta Cave No. 1 (See R.D. Banerji's *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*, Plate LXIIIa, where the name is spelt as 'Kārttikāiṇī').

6 13.34.

7 Page 46, para 58 of Schoff's edition ; see also *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. X, p. 36 ; we reproduce below the original passage from the *Periplus*, "Beyond this there is another place called Comari at which are the cape of Comari and a harbour ; hither come those men who wish to consecrate themselves for the rest of their lives, and bathe and dwell in celibacy ; and women also do the same ; for it is told that a goddess once dwelt here and bathed".

8 See *E.I.*, Vol. XXVI, p. 117 (fn. 2).

9 *M A.S.I.*, No. XXIII, p. 78.

10 For the fig. see *J.A.S.B.* (Letters) Vol. XXII, Plate IB.

11 See *ibid.*, Plate IIC.

12 See *M.A.S.I.*, No. 44 *Exploratiion in Orissa*, p. 3 ; also Chandraśekhar Banerjee's article 'An account of the antiquity of Jajpur in Orissa' in *J.A.S.B.*, XL, part I, p. 153.

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Corrigenda

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,,	11, line 6	,,	Umā
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,,	16, line 11	,,	232
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,,	25, line 9	,,	*bhavitā*
,,	30, line 29	,,	Meyer
,,	31, line 1	,,	Pāṇḍeya
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,,	41, line 5	,,	Śaka
,,	44, line 11	,,	Kālidāsa
,,	45, line 14	,,	Śakti
,,	46, line 15	,,	existed
,,	47, line 2	,,	the
,,	48, line 20	,,	Śiva
,,	50, line 31	,,	Dikshit
,,	64, line 16	,,	fourth
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,,	87, line 26	,,	*sarvapāpapraṇaśanam*
,,	91, line 33	,,	Hariṇagameśi
,,	95, line 2	,,	Krodhaghna
,,	102, line 23	,,	Śarvavarman
,,	119, line 10	,,	the
,,	144, line 11	,,	Śaśāṅka
,,	144, line 24	,,	texts

Fig 1

Fig 2

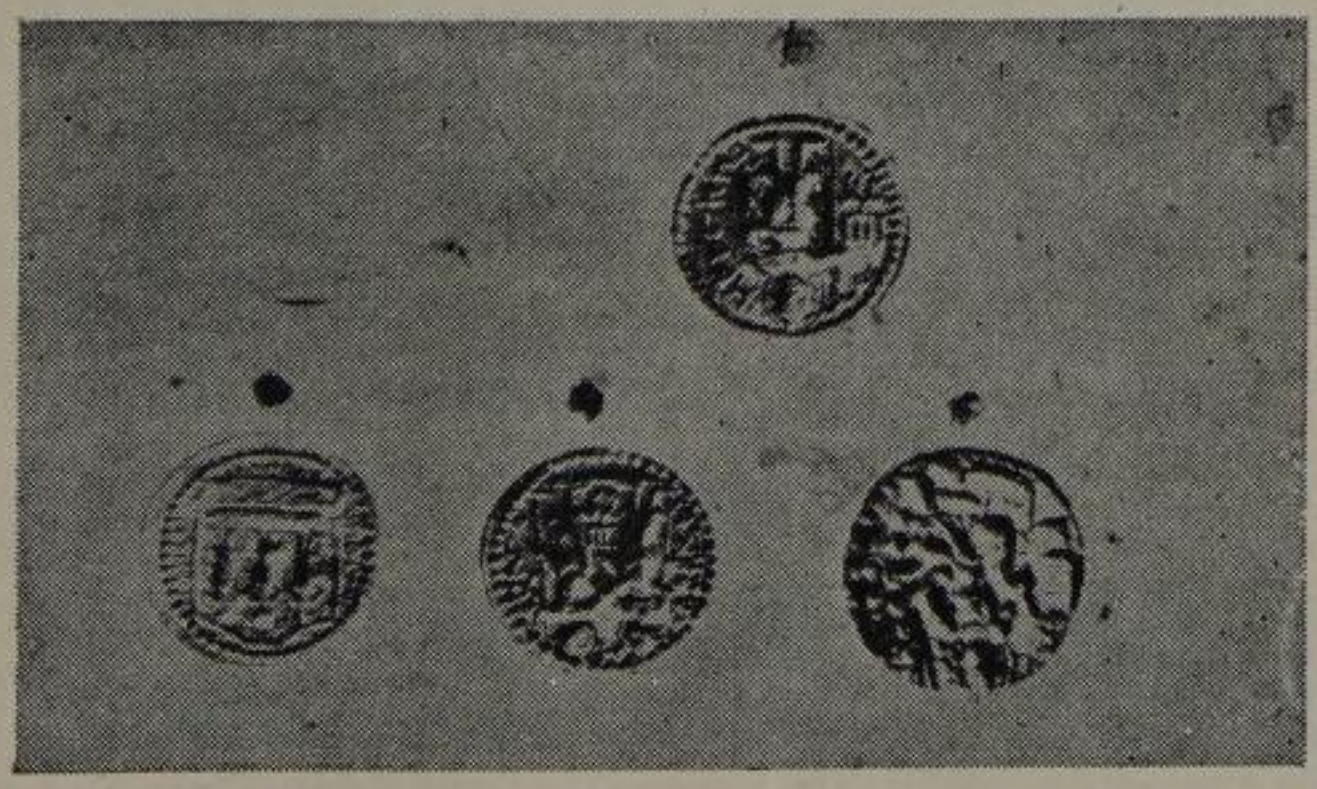

Fig 3

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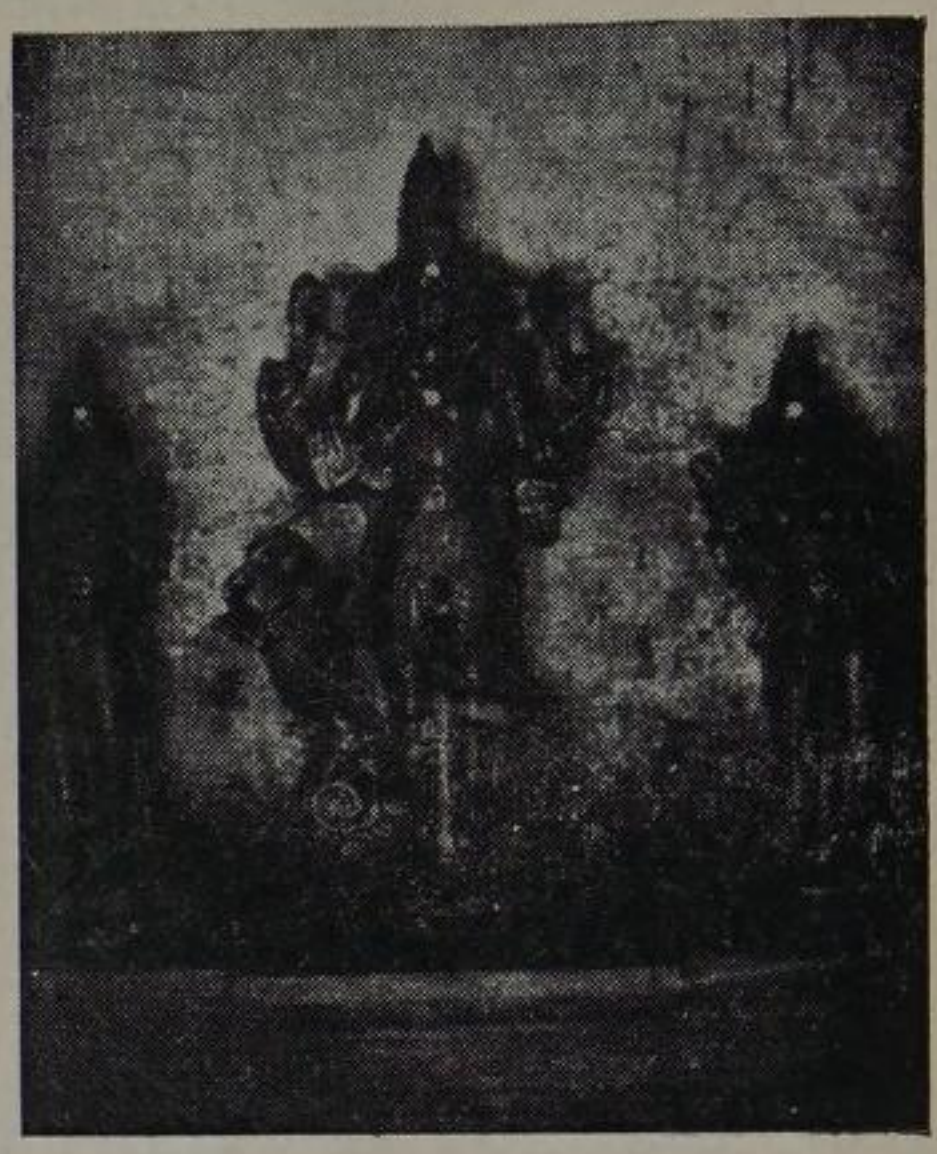

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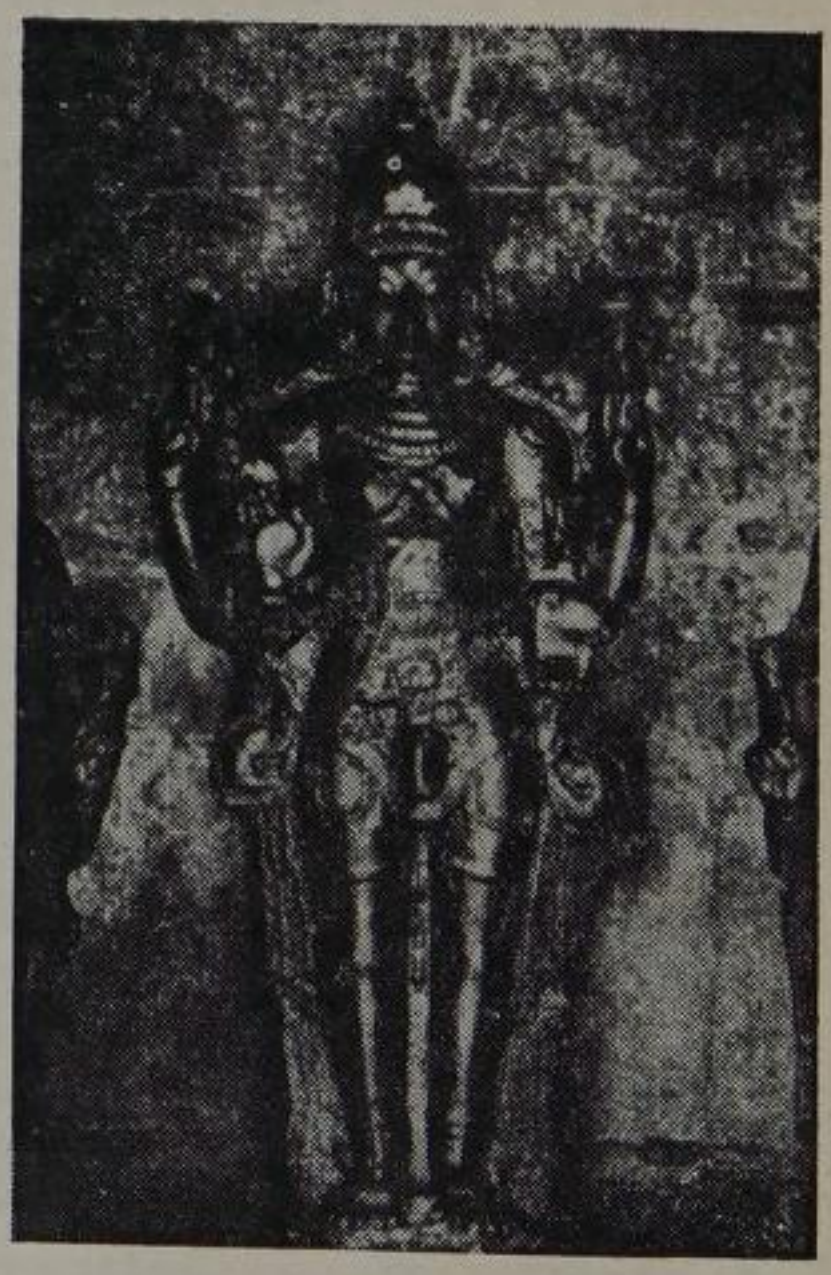

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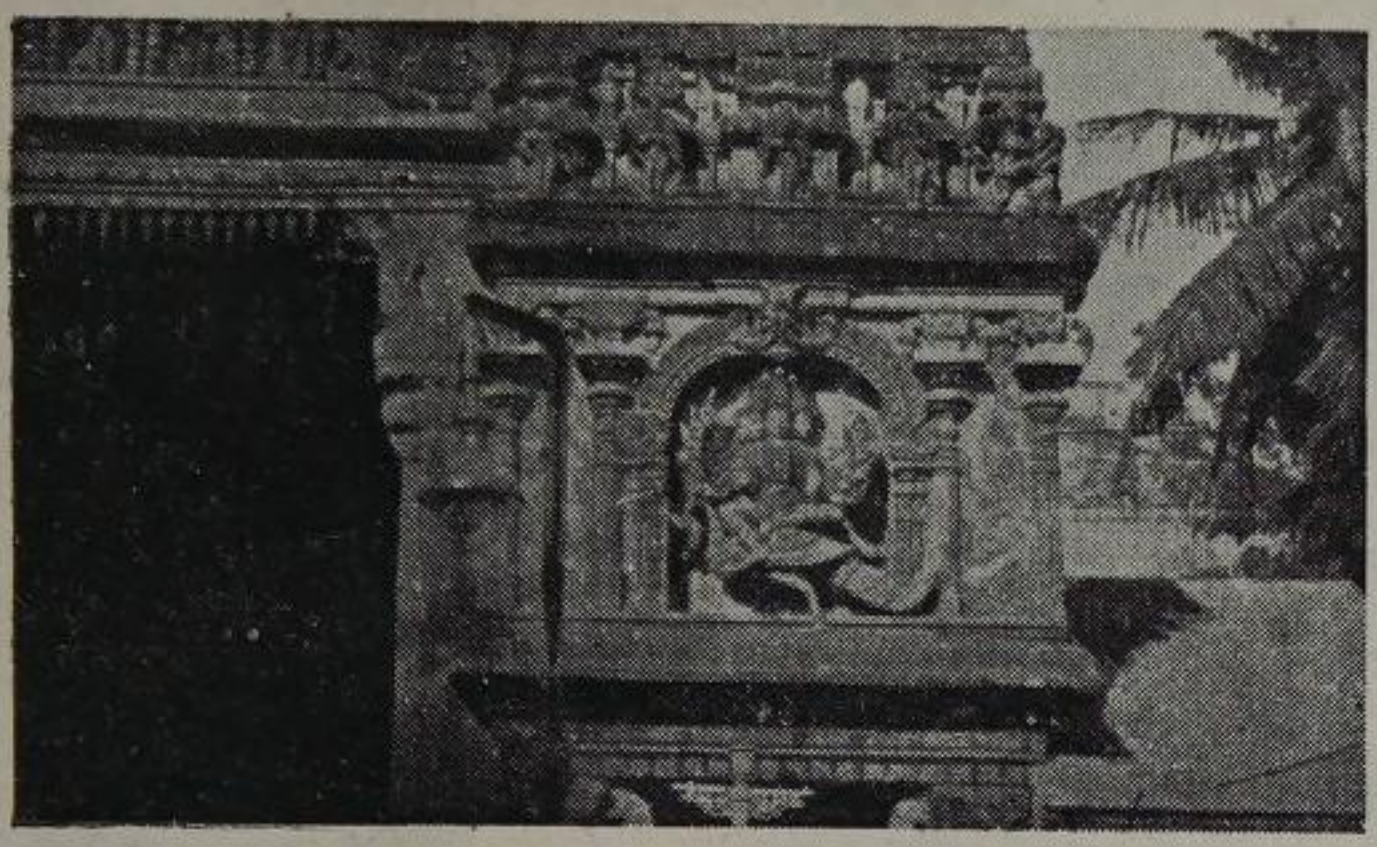

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